



Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard
Intersection Improvement Project

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**RTC Project No. 73299
Federal Project No. CM-0191-(063)**

Community Impact Assessment

October 2011
Revised December 2011

**Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County,
Federal Highway Administration,
and
Nevada Department of Transportation**

PARSONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Community Impact Assessment is to provide information regarding the anticipated social, economic, and land use effects of the proposed project so that the consequences on the human environment are considered. The report is intended to describe the relevant existing conditions and the potential impacts of the project and what measures may be taken, if warranted, to reduce, minimize, or avoid such impacts.

Areas of assessment include consistency with local and regional land use plans; changes in population and employment; community cohesion and interaction; barrier effects; emergency response; access changes – bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and vehicular; community facility impacts; property displacements; economic and fiscal impacts, and environmental justice. In many cases, details on specific impacts, such as noise, traffic access, cultural resources, and visual impacts, are included in other technical reports prepared for this project.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A Community Impact Assessment considers how a proposed project would affect all aspects of the human environment (i.e., the people, institutions, neighborhoods, organizations, and economic systems) of the project area. A Community Impact Assessment has been defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as “a process to evaluate the effects of a proposed transportation action on a community and its quality of life.” Essentially, community impacts are defined in terms other than those solely affecting the drivers and users of a transportation facility. With community impact assessment, changes in such environmental factors as noise, land use mix, views, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and an area’s sense of community and livability are included.

1.1 Report Organization

This Community Impact Assessment is organized into seven sections. Section 1 discusses the report organization, identifies the relevant statutes and regulations, and describes the purpose and need for the project and of the project alternatives.

Section 2 describes the affected environment of the study area and includes a discussion of current and planned land uses and growth policies; demographic and social characteristics; housing patterns; information on community-serving public facilities, including medical, fire, and police services; parks and recreational facilities; and local and regional economic characteristics.

Section 3 analyzes the potential impacts of the No Build Alternative and Build Alternative, including how the proposed project is consistent with land use policies, how it relates to growth and development in the surrounding area, and whether it has the potential to result in unforeseen indirect growth. The project’s effects related to displacement of residences and businesses, park and recreation facilities, circulation and access, and the local economy are also analyzed. Section 3 also analyzes potential impacts to community cohesion and character.

Section 4 includes an Environmental Justice analysis pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 12898 (59 *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] 7629). Under EO 12898, demographic information is used to determine whether minority populations and/or low-income populations are present within the study area. If so, a determination is made as to whether implementation of the proposed project would result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts to those populations.

Section 5 outlines the public involvement practices utilized for this project. Section 6 provides recommendations for mitigation measures related to the potential adverse impacts. Section 7 provides a list of references used in the preparation of this report. Appendices outlining the relocation assistance process and identifying the preparers of this technical report are also included.

1.2 Statutes and Regulations

Consideration of social, economic, and land use implications of proposed Federal actions is required by specific regulations, statutes, policies, technical advisories, and Executive Orders, including:

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)
- 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) 109(h) “Consideration of Economic, Social, and Environmental Effects” (1970)
- FHWA Technical Advisory 6640.8A (1987), Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and related statutes
- EO 12898 on Environmental Justice (February 11, 1994)
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Order on Environmental Justice, 1997
- 42 U.S.C. 4601 *et. seq.* “Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies for Federal and Federally Assisted Programs, as amended, 1987

1.3 Project Description

RTC, in cooperation with NDOT and FHWA, is studying operational improvements to the intersection of Pyramid Way (State Route 445) and McCarran Boulevard (State Route 659) in Sparks, Washoe County, Nevada.

The proposed project would widen the intersection in the northeast section in the city of Sparks in Washoe County. Two proposed alternatives are being considered for the project: the Modified Expanded At-Grade Intersection (Build Alternative) and the No Build Alternative. The Build Alternative is shown in Figure 1-1 and Figures 1-2a through 1-2d. As detailed in Appendix A – Screening of Improvement Concepts in the *Design Alternatives Report* (Parsons, 2011), 13 improvement concepts were considered and eliminated by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

1.3.1 Build Alternative

Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard are currently two through lanes in each direction. The proposed improvements would widen Pyramid Way to three through lanes in each direction from Queen Way to Tyler Way. McCarran Boulevard would remain two through lanes in each direction. Operational improvements at the intersection consist of additional turning lanes: eastbound (EB) McCarran Boulevard to northbound (NB) Pyramid Way, westbound (WB) McCarran Boulevard to southbound (SB) Pyramid Way, WB McCarran Boulevard to NB Pyramid Way, NB Pyramid Way to WB McCarran Boulevard, and SB Pyramid Way to WB McCarran Boulevard. The Pyramid Way and Queen Way intersection would also be reconfigured to improve access to the surrounding neighborhoods. Widening of Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard would occur on the east and south sides, respectively, to accommodate these improvements.

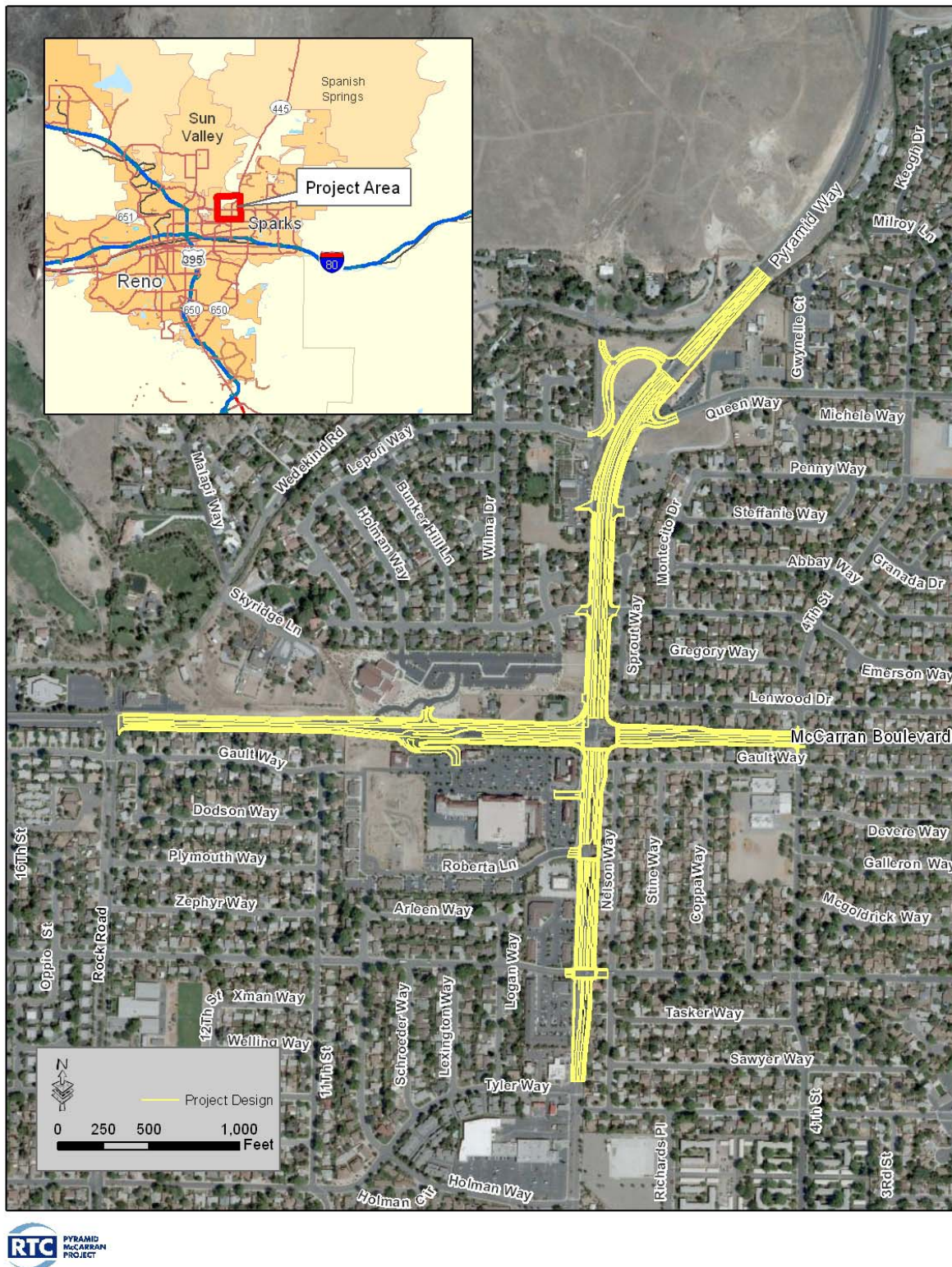
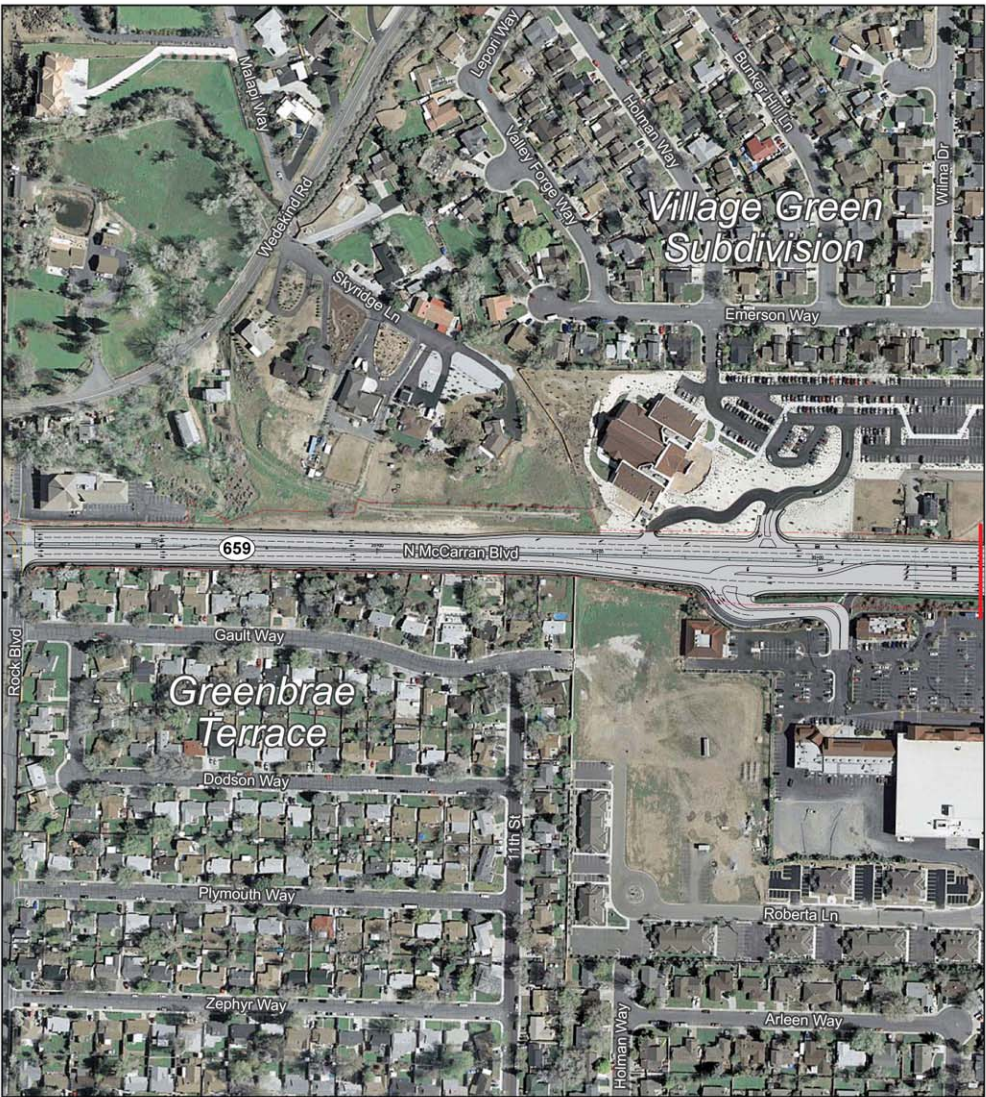


Figure 1-1
Project Location

2. Affected Environment



Source: Parsons 2011

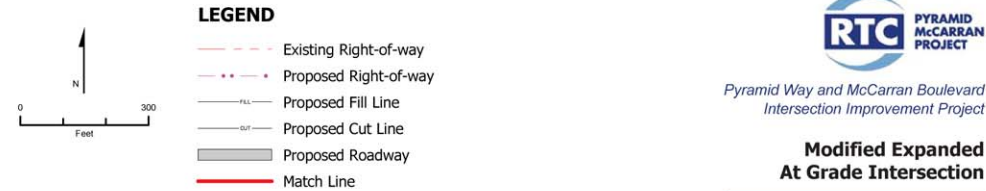
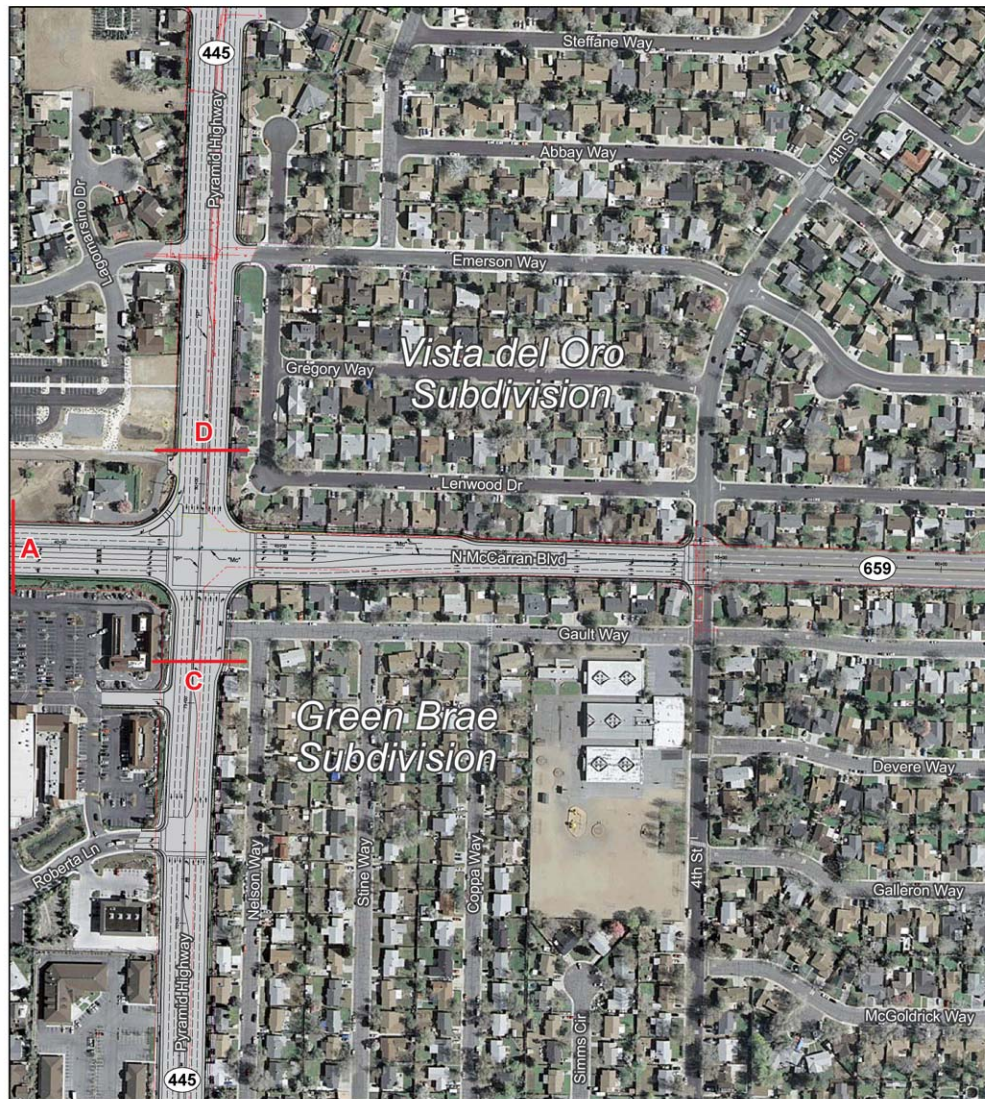


Figure 1-2a

Figure 1-2a
Build Alternative



Source: Parsons 2011

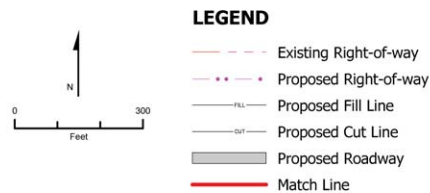
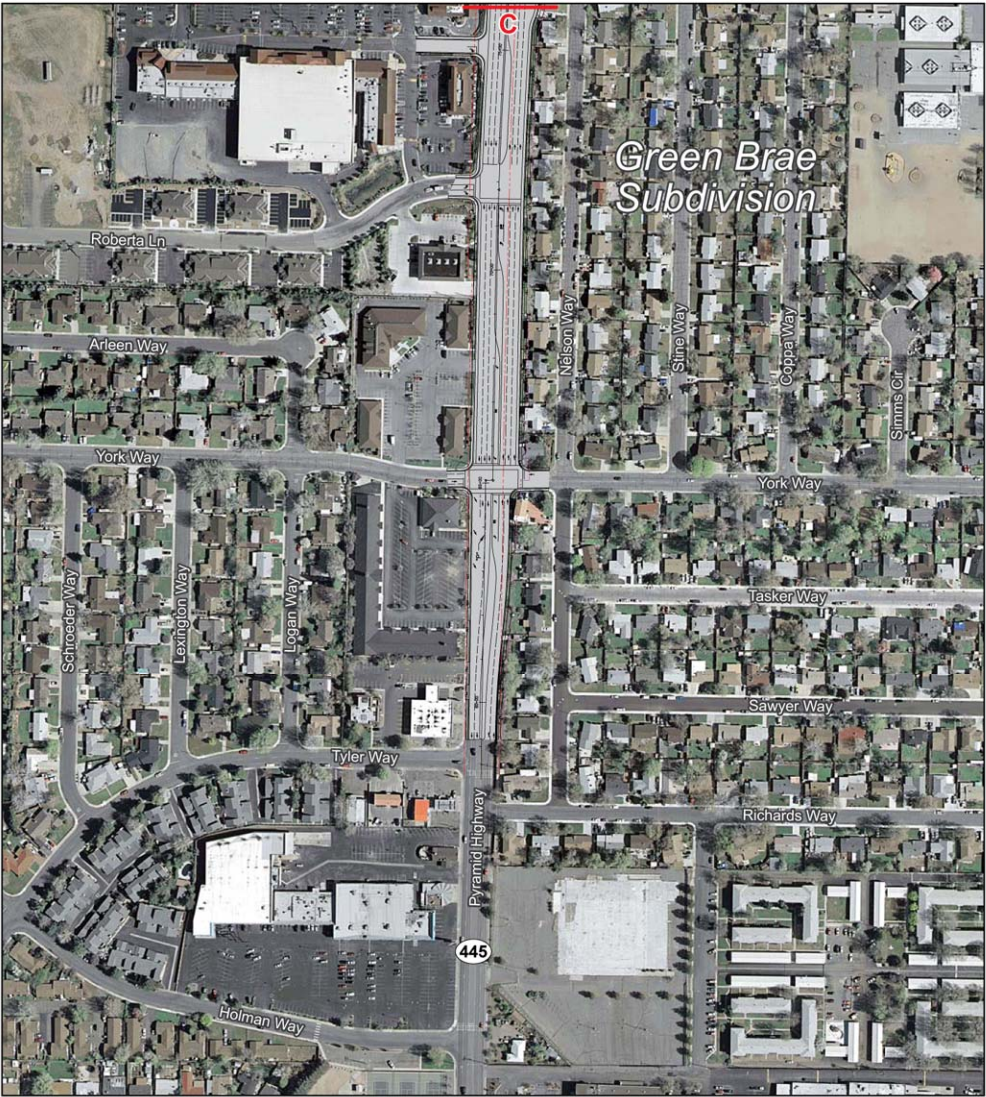


Figure 1-2b

Figure 1-2b
Build Alternative

2. Affected Environment



Source: Parsons 2011

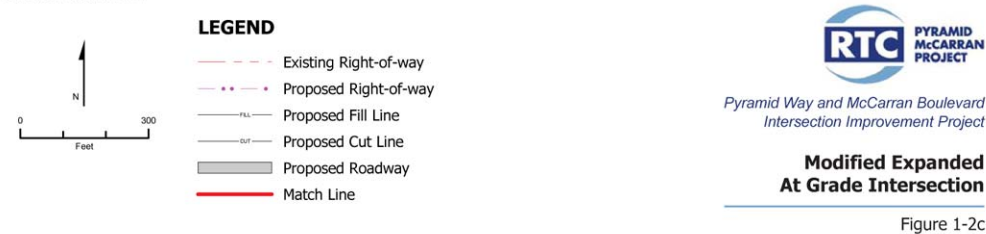
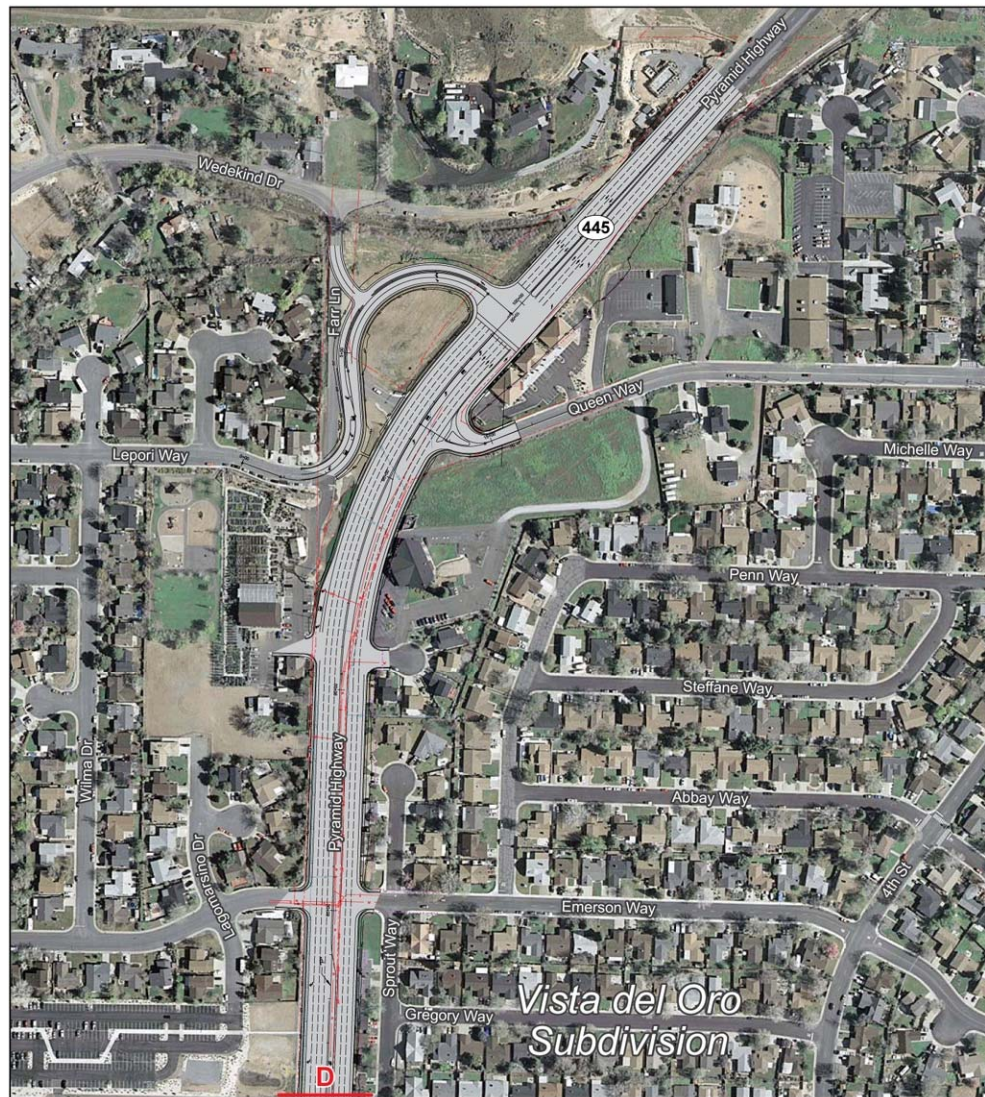
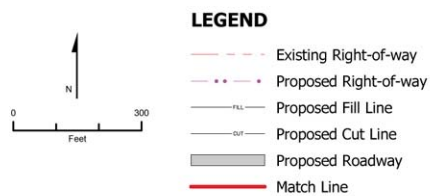


Figure 1-2c

Figure 1-2c
Build Alternative



Source: Parsons 2011



Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard
Intersection Improvement Project

**Modified Expanded
At Grade Intersection**

Figure 1-2d

Figure 1-2d
Build Alternative

1.3.2 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative represents the scenario of no action being taken and the existing transportation system remaining unchanged. Under the No Build Alternative, no construction activities would occur. No changes are proposed to the existing number of turn lanes or the configuration of the existing intersection under this alternative.

1.4 Study Area Delineation

The study area boundaries vary somewhat, depending on the statistical areas used to report the social and economic data utilized in this report. For purposes of the impact analysis, any community facilities located within 0.5-mile radius of the project footprint are included in the community impact analysis (see Figure 1-3). U.S. Census Block Groups located immediately adjacent to the project area provide the most detailed social and economic data. These are Census Tract 28.01, Block Groups 1 and 2; Census Tract 28.02, Block Group 4; Census Tract 29.01, Block Groups 1 and 3; and Census Tract 29.02, Block Groups 1 and 2 and as depicted in Figure 1-4. However, the Census Block Group footprint could not be easily overlaid on the 0.5 mile radius without encompassing much larger data sets than needed relative to the anticipated impacts. In certain other cases the socioeconomic data is extrapolated at a larger scale because of the way the information is aggregated; this includes information from an entire Census Tract, the City of Sparks as a whole, the Reno-Sparks metropolitan area combined, and as a backdrop to Washoe County and the State of Nevada.

1.5 Methodology

In addition to field reviews conducted in the potentially affected neighborhoods in or adjacent to the project area, this Community Impact Assessment was based upon a review and analysis of demographic forecasts, U.S. Census data, regional economic publications, local and regional community plans and documents, aerial photographs, minutes from public involvement sessions attended by interested parties, and numerous other sources of information, including resources available online through the Internet. The City of Sparks Community Development Department staff also provided useful information and insights.



Figure 1-3
Study Area

2. Affected Environment

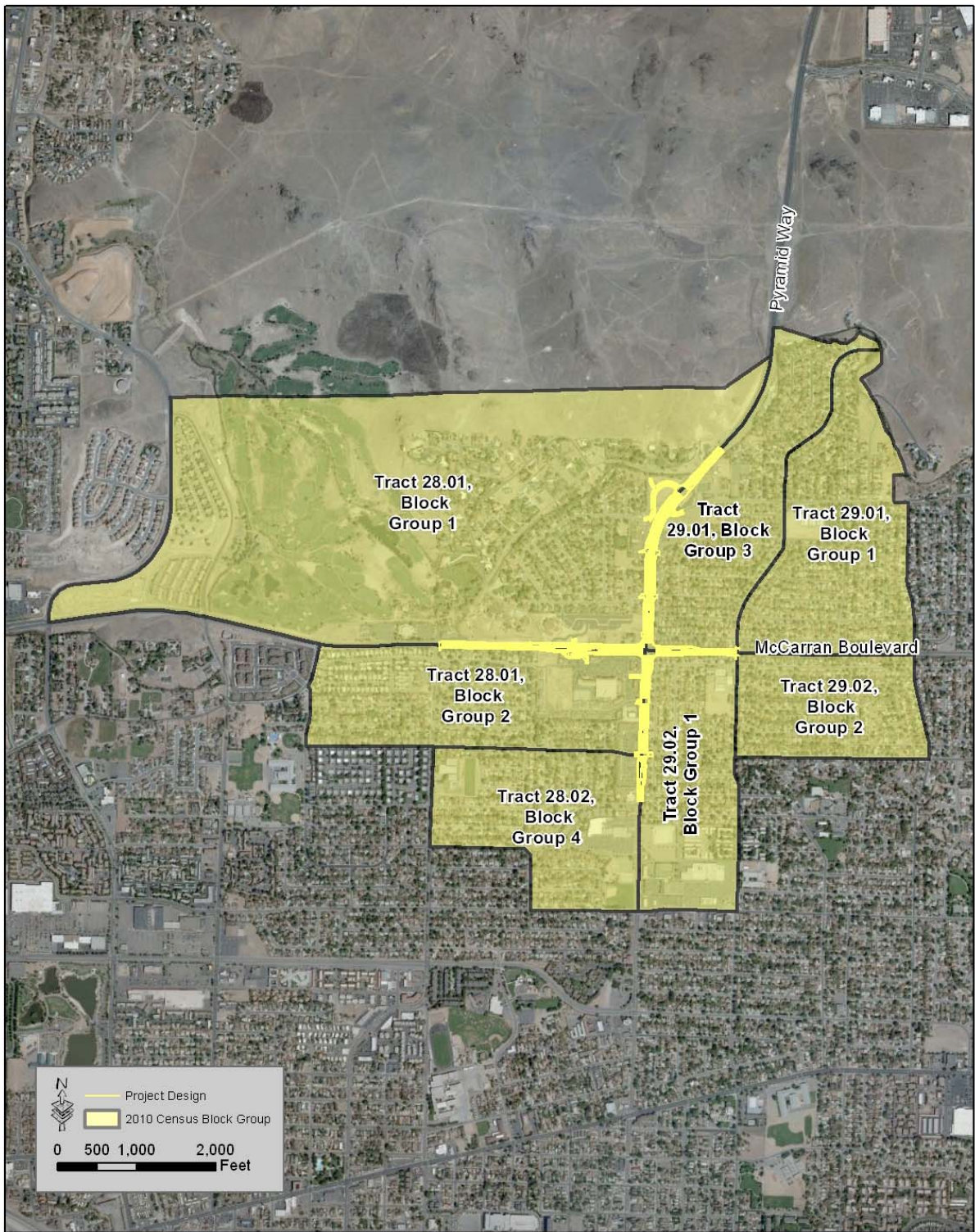


Figure 1-4
Census Block Groups

2. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Following the study area delineation presented in Section 1, the second major step in the process to understand transportation-related impacts on a community is to describe the affected environment in terms of existing and planned land use, planning goals and policies, demographics, public services and facilities, and economic characteristics. This portion of the technical document is often referred to as a community profile, which might be considered a snapshot of the community as it is today. Accordingly, this section consists of a general description of the study area and provides a statistical comparison of the project area to the surrounding region.

2.1 Community—Background

Sparks, a community whose origins trace back to when the Southern Pacific Railroad chose to shift its switching yards 25 miles to where the community is today, reflects these beginnings in its early nickname, “The Rail City.” Named after then Governor John Sparks, the town formally incorporated in 1905 and within 5 years supported its own newspaper, *The Sparks Tribune*. The town’s first few decades were largely shaped by the presence of the rail yards, and the Southern Pacific Railroad was the town’s main employer, with more than 4,500 employees at its height during World War II. Many of the operations in the Sparks rail yards, however, eventually moved 118 miles southwest to the other side of the Sierra Nevada, to Roseville, California.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the City of Sparks experienced significant changes. Foremost among the transformations was the emergence of casino operations, initiated with the opening of the Nugget in 1955. A second influencing factor that would help shape the development of Sparks for many decades was the introduction of state taxation and fiscal policies that deliberately favored business operations. The City of Sparks oriented its land use and zoning policies to encourage the establishment of warehouse and distribution operations; the completion of Interstate 80 (I-80) through Sparks in 1972 provided a further stimulus to those efforts. As legalized gambling on Indian lands in California has recently expanded and reduced the number of casino-visitors to Reno-Sparks, business leaders have taken steps to diversify the economy and expand the base that had for so long relied on the gaming industry. Efforts include the creation in 2007 of the upscale outlet mall Legends at Sparks Marina, containing 45 retailers and restaurants, and in 2009, a new minor league baseball stadium downtown for the Reno Aces, the Triple A affiliation of the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Each of these major chapters in the area’s history had the effect of reshaping and reorienting the community’s character. Most recently, many master-planned communities in the northern Sparks area of Spanish Springs have been constructed or are in the process of having their construction phased, and are now largely stalled with the downturn in the economy. Sparks, as with much of Washoe County, continues to attract visitors with its nearby recreational boating and skiing amenities and close-by heritage tourism venues, including Carson City and Virginia City. In addition, many community-wide cultural events are hosted in Sparks each year, foremost among them Hot August Nights, believed to be the nation’s largest classic car show, and the Nugget Rib Cook-Off traditionally held over Labor Day weekend, with each event attracting upwards of a

2. Affected Environment

half-million visitors. For its permanent residents, however, Sparks offers an outdoors environment, affordable housing, good educational facilities, and generally an overall comfortable quality of life. With more than 90,000 residents, Sparks has grown to become Nevada's fifth largest city and encompasses 34 square miles.

2.2 Land Use Characteristics

2.2.1 Existing Land Use Characteristics

The study area is located in the west-central area of the city of Sparks, in Washoe County, Nevada. Sparks, located in Truckee Meadows between the Carson and Virginia Mountain Ranges, lies on the east side of the Reno-Sparks metropolitan area. Sparks is considered by most to be a bedroom community, with the exception of several commercial and industrial sections located adjacent to major highway and street thoroughfares. The city is bordered on the north by the newer communities of Sun Valley and Spanish Springs, unincorporated Washoe County on the east and south, and the city of Reno centered 3 miles to the west. The Sparks area is bisected by I-80, traversing in an east-west direction, and US 395, running in a north-south direction.

The general area of the proposed Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard Intersection Improvement Project contains several well-established residential neighborhoods. The project limits are generally bounded by North Rock Boulevard to the west, 4th Street to the east, Tyler Way to the south, and Queen Way to the north. As the major north-south corridor traversing the community, Pyramid Way hosts most of the local-serving retail shops and commercial enterprises and is interspersed with small offices providing various community services. Residential neighborhoods, which extend on both sides of Pyramid Way, are comprised of mostly detached single-family units whose period of construction dates from the 1950s and 1960s. These larger neighborhoods are located mostly south of McCarran Boulevard, although more recently constructed single-family residences are located on slightly higher terrain to the north of McCarran Boulevard, both east and west of Pyramid Way. Religious and park and recreation facilities are intermingled and located adjacent to residential areas. While well-established retail plazas, such as the Greenbrae Shopping Center, operate to the south and beyond the direct project area, a popular and prominent neighborhood shopping center facility known as Sparks Mercantile occupies the southwest corner of the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection. Immediately north of the project intersection area, beyond the residential areas known as Village Green and Vista Del Oro, are open-range lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and even farther north on either side of Pyramid Highway, lays Spanish Springs Valley.

2.2.2 Adopted Plans and Policies

Truckee Meadows Regional Plan

In 1989, Nevada's State Legislature created the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency to foster coordination among the three local governments: the Cities of Reno and Sparks, and Washoe County. The first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1991, with updates undertaken in 1996, 2002, and 2007. The Regional Plan is scheduled for its next update in 2012-13. The 2007 Regional Plan focuses on coordinating the Master (or Comprehensive) Plans of the three local governments in the region as they relate to land use planning, infrastructure provision, resources

management, and implementation policies. Sparks is located in what has been designated as the Northeast Truckee Meadows planning area by Washoe County.

City of Sparks Comprehensive Plan

Land use planning in the study area is governed by the City of Sparks Comprehensive Plan, which until recently was called the Master Plan. The City's Plan contains those elements required by the State of Nevada for every jurisdiction: Land Use and Transportation, Housing, Population, Conservation, Development and Public Facilities, though in some cases the City is choosing to rename required elements to reflect new planning directions. The Community Development Department of Sparks is currently undertaking a comprehensive set of updates and revisions to the City's Comprehensive Plan; adoption by the Sparks City Planning Commission is expected in September 2011, with a presentation to the City Council for approval some time thereafter.

The Sparks Comprehensive Plan Section, "A Connected City," has identified two goals (and several policies) that are relevant to the proposed project:

Goal CC 2: Promote Design that Facilitates Multimodal Transportation

- Policy CC 2.5: In older parts of Sparks, the City will seek opportunities to make multimodal the local streets and to make them more attractive, pedestrian friendly.

Goal CC 3: Coordinate Land Use and Circulation Decisions to Promote Alternative Modes of Transportation

- Policy CC 3.1: The City will work with RTC and NDOT to ensure the City's goals and policies are considered in the design of new roadways or improvements to existing roadways.
- Policy CC 3.2: The City will maintain an active presence in regional and state-level transportation planning activities (e.g., improvements to I-80 or Pyramid Way) to identify opportunities for joint planning/construction efforts, enhanced levels of service, and monitoring impacts on the City.
- Policy CC 3.3: The City will require that proposed road improvements be reviewed by all permitting departments to ensure design and construction comply with the Complete Street standards.

The Sparks Comprehensive Plan encourages balanced and orderly urban development. The Comprehensive Plan contains goals, objectives, and policies that guide growth and development within areas under the City's jurisdiction. Under Nevada law, cities must declare a sphere of influence consistent with the regional plan; it is best defined as a potential development area extending into surrounding unincorporated land. The sphere of influence plan requires the use of planned unit development (PUD) standards handbooks, which allows the City to review each project's infrastructure and design. All unincorporated areas contiguous to the city of Sparks are eligible for annexation. In areas annexed and made part of the city, the development handbooks or area plans prepared and approved for the larger planned unit developments stand in for the City's zoning and land-use controls. Planning efforts have led the City of Sparks to physically expand over the years; going from 25.4 square miles in 2001 to 34.1 square miles by 2010, representing a jurisdictional increase of more than 25 percent land size in slightly less than a decade. The areas that the City intends to annex in the period 2008-2015 are shown in Figure 2-1.

2. Affected Environment

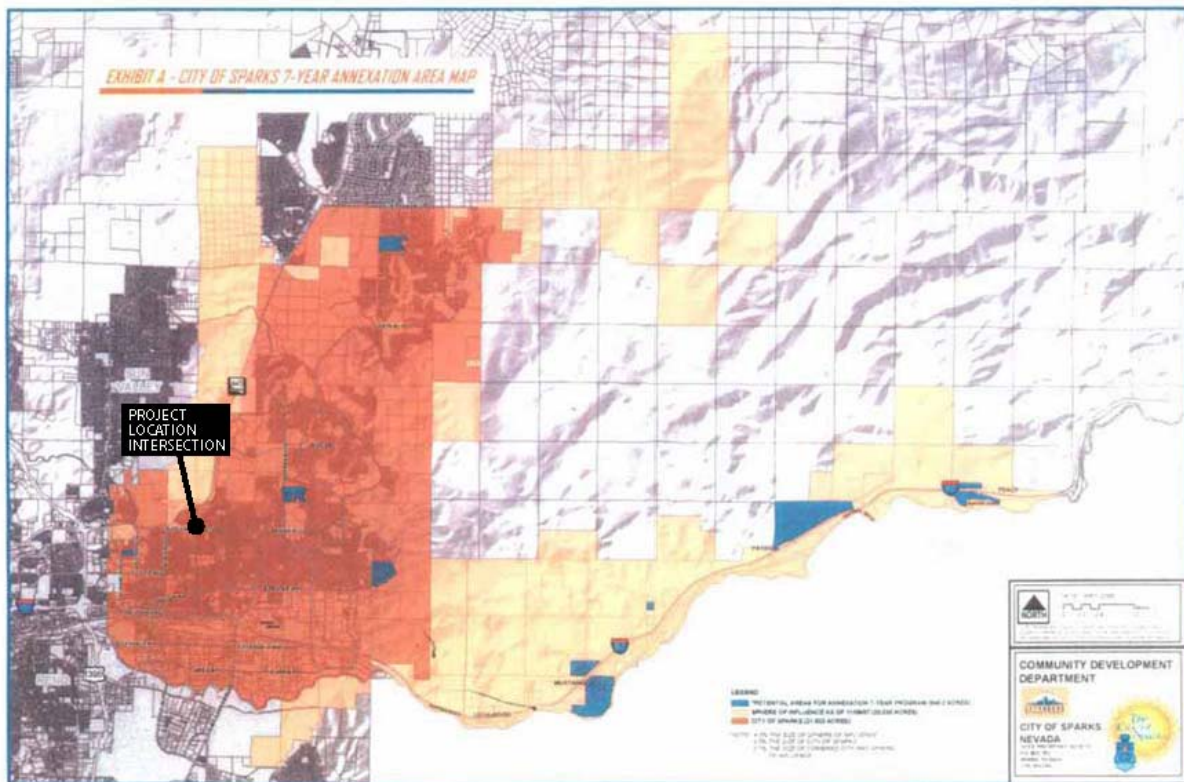
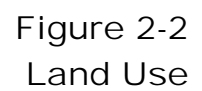


Figure 2-1
Annexation Map

The stated overall goal in the Land Use Element of the Plan is to “accommodate population growth and influence its distribution in order to protect and use scarce resources wisely.” The element recommends urban growth to be directed to areas within or adjacent to existing urban areas. See Figures 2-2 and 2-3 for the Land Use and Zoning designations for the City of Sparks.

The City of Sparks has created two redevelopment districts: the first one, Victorian Square, was originated in downtown Sparks in 1977, and the second, a noncontiguous district – comprising three separate sections: Marina Park, Oddie Boulevard, and Conductor Heights – was created in 1999. No redevelopment areas are located within 0.5-mile of the project area.



2. Affected Environment

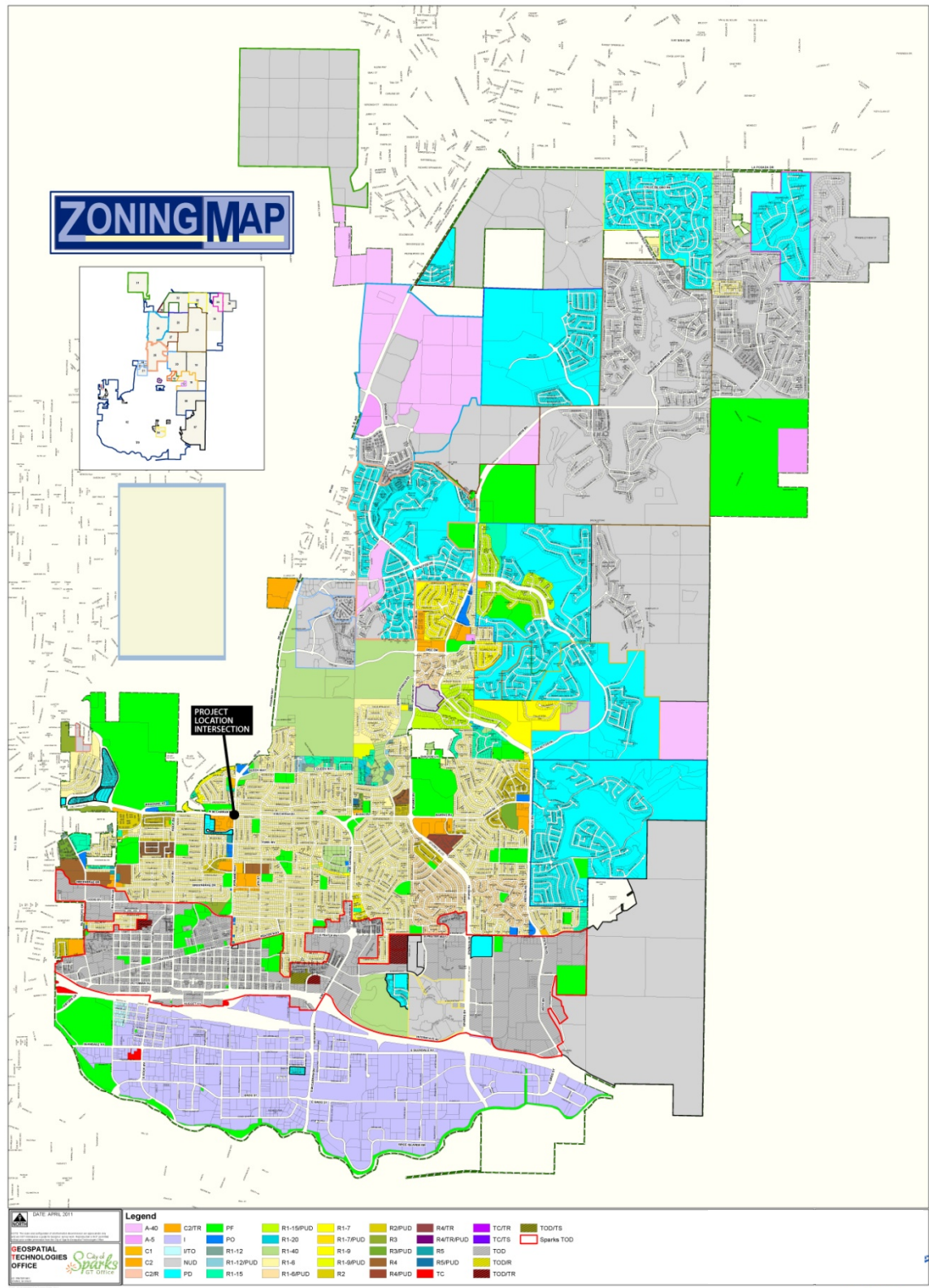


Figure 2-3
Zoning

Regional Transportation Commission Regional Transportation Plan

The RTC of Washoe County, which is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), is responsible for development and implementation of the RTP, the official long-range transportation plan for the county and its jurisdictions. By law, the Washoe County RTP must be found in conformance with the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, discussed above. The 2040 RTP was adopted November 21, 2008, replacing the 2030 plan, approved in 2004.

Six broad goals were developed to guide implementation of the RTP:

1. Provide for and sustain a mix of transportation modes that can meet the continuing needs for personal mobility and for the movement of goods consistent with regional goals and values.
2. Comprehensively plan for all regionally significant modes of transportation and insure their interconnection. Coordinate with all other jurisdictions that either influence or are affected by regional transportation planning efforts.
3. Develop a balanced land-use and transportation system that minimizes the need for automobile travel and maximizes the opportunity for transportation alternatives such as public transportation and nonmotorized modes.
4. Maintain, upgrade, or develop existing and future transportation systems as a public service in a way that renders them safe, functional, flexible, environmentally acceptable, and aesthetically pleasing.
5. Manage the transportation system to provide an optimum level of mobility for the greatest number of persons while insuring mobility for the transportation disadvantaged.
6. Improve safety in all transportation modes through timely maintenance of existing infrastructure, development of new infrastructure, enforcement of access controls, and expanded public education and awareness.

Washoe County's RTP Street and Highway Element notes within the City of Sparks that Pyramid Way, particularly the stretch from McCarran Boulevard to Queen Way, experiences poor peak-period Level of Service (LOS), a standard measure by which traffic engineers rate the effectiveness and efficiency of transportation systems by categorizing traffic flow with corresponding safe driving conditions. The Element indicates that the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection experiences heavy congestion, especially during the morning peak period.

The need for improvements to this intersection was originally identified in the 1999 Pyramid Highway Management Plan, which was subsequently incorporated into the 2030 RTP, first adopted in 2001. The 2001 version of the 2030 RTP identified an objective to be addressed in the mid-term (2007-2012): to bring the entire length of McCarran Boulevard up to High Access Control Standards. It also suggested that an Urban Interchanges designation be considered as a tool to accomplish that end. The 2004 update to the 2030 RTP showed a larger systems framework and identified a need to construct 12 grade-separated intersections on McCarran Boulevard by 2030 due to projections of high traffic volumes and anticipated congestion from

2. Affected Environment

projected regional growth and development. The Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection is the first of these intersections to be addressed, 6 of which are shown in the RTP to be undertaken by 2018.

The Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) is required by federal regulation and is designed to serve as a tool to help plan and program regional and local transportation system improvements. The 2009-2013 RTIP for Washoe County is the most recent version of the short-term plan and priority listing of major street and highway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects for Washoe County and its municipal jurisdictions of Reno and Sparks. The RTIP summarizes projects for each of the 5 fiscal years and indicates which agency is responsible for implementation, likely funding sources, and other related information. On November 21, 2008, the RTC concurred with the need for the intersection improvement project at Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard.

2.2.3 Development Trends and Developable Lands

Sparks was reported to be the fastest growing city in Nevada between 2000 and 2008, with a population estimated to have increased from 66,324 in 2000 to 92,315 in 2008. This trend has dramatically slowed in the short period of time since. For the most part, up until recently, most of the City's development was occurring within large planned developments; most of the residential developments consist of single-family units.

New household developments generate increased automobile traffic, which in turn create a demand for new roadway capacity to forestall worsening congestion. To help pay for the additional transportation network required to support the new development, RTC imposes a regional road impact fee (RRIF) on new development. As of 2009, the RRIF Program, which is updated every 2 years, has constructed infrastructure capacity improvements projects, including new roads, road widenings, and ramp and intersection improvements, totaling approximately \$234 million.

In the past few years, Sparks has experienced a significant drop in new developments. The number of construction permits issued by the City of Sparks jumped from 3,609 in 2000 to a plateau of 6,033 in 2006. With the economic downturn in 2007-2008, the City issued 2,007 permits in 2010, a full two-thirds drop from the number issued 4 years earlier. Another measure of the changed economic picture in Sparks is to look at the City's total annual construction value – from a high of more than \$382 million in 2006 to slightly less than \$57 million in 2010. Before the economic climate so drastically changed, many phased major development and master-planned community projects were in various stages of approval and construction. Most of these are located in the north reaches of the municipal area or just beyond the current political boundaries of the City of Sparks, in Spanish Springs Valley, but construction and development of them would generate substantial traffic impacts on Sparks because their nearly sole access to greater downtown Reno is via Pyramid Lake Highway (see Table 2-1), through the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection.

Table 2-1: Recently Completed/Anticipated Major Developments in Northern Sparks

Name	Project Size	Status	Notes/Location
Kiley Ranch South	632 units.	482 units completed.	East side of Sparks Boulevard, 1.5 miles north of Los Altos Boulevard.
Spanish Springs Town Centre	General commercial land uses on 41 acres.	17.9 acres have been developed	A tire store and auto parts store are currently under construction as of summer 2011.
Sparks Crossing	General commercial land uses on 41 acres.	41 acres have been developed	Currently, there are a large amount of vacant units.
Stonebrook	Residential (2,135 dwelling units), retail and commercial land uses on 610 acres.	0 acres have been developed, the tentative maps have expired.	South of La Posada, east of Pyramid Highway.
Sparks Galleria	A mixed-use development, including general commercial, professional offices, and 175 housing units on 133 acres.	Partially open; other elements still under construction.	Located north of the extension of Disc Drive to Pyramid Highway. Project includes Home Depot, Costco, and Office Depot.
Kiley Ranch North	A mixed-use development, including commercial and business parks, and between 3,000 and 4,000 residential units on 808 acres.	Being built in phases; 60 acres have been developed as of summer 2011, the project is in bankruptcy proceedings.	Located at the intersection of Sparks Boulevard and Kiley Ranch Parkway. The project dedicates acreage to schools, parks, and open space.
Pioneer Meadows	A master-planned community with approximately 2,500 housing units and manufacturing, office, and medical facilities.	Villages 1, 2, 3, 4, and 9 under construction	Located south of the Wingfield Springs at the intersection of Vista Boulevard and Wingfield Hills Road.
Tierra Del Sol	115 single-family units on 17.9 acres, 24.74 acres of commercial.	27.8 acres have been developed	The development includes 7.1 acres dedicated for open space.
Miramonte	960-acre residential development with 986 single-family homes.	166 units completed	Located south of Wingfield Springs. The project includes 551 common use areas and 4 acres of neighborhood parks.
The Foothills at Wingfield Springs	Approximately 1,978 single-family dwellings and 300 multi-family units on 690 acres.	Approvals granted; 1,070 units completed	Commercial land use areas redesignated for multi-family; Plans for commercial site amended to include a new school.
Spring Mountain Development	6105 acres, approximately 12,000 residential units	Approvals granted, no construction	Located 30 miles north of the project area

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2.3 Social Environment

2.3.1 Population

As of 2010, the population of Sparks is 90,264. Since 2000, the City has experienced a population growth rate of 36 percent. This compares to a change of 24 percent for Washoe County as a whole and 35 percent for the State of Nevada over the same time horizon. Table 2-2 shows the population growth of Sparks, Washoe County, and the State of Nevada from 1980 to 2010.

Table 2-2: Population Growth, 1980-2010

Area	Total Population				2000-2010 Population Growth
	1980	1990	2000	2010	
City of Sparks	40,780	53,367	66,346	90,264	36%
Washoe County	193,625	254,667	339,486	421,407	24%
Nevada	800,493	1,201,833	1,998,260	2,700,551	35%

Source: U.S. Census Demographic Profile Data.

Sparks had an annual population growth rate that averaged 4.5 percent from 2002 to 2008. The slowdown since is reflected by the city's 2010 estimate of its annual population growth at 0.5 percent.

2.3.2 Age

As Table 2-3 indicates, as of 2010, the population percentage of persons under 18 within Washoe County and Sparks is at least twice as great as that of the elderly population; this age composition is also similar for the State of Nevada. Sparks closely mirrors the state average with 12 percent of its population being comprised of people over age 65, as is also true for Washoe County as a whole.

Table 2-3: Population by Age Group

Age	City of Sparks	Washoe County	Nevada
Median Age	35.5	37.0	36.3
Under 18	26%	24%	25%
20 – 24	7%	8%	7%
25 – 34	14%	13%	14%
35 – 49	21%	20%	21%
50 – 64	18%	20%	18%
65 & over	11%	12%	12%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census, Summary File; Percentages have been rounded off so that they may not equal exactly 100%. 1.

2.3.3 Race and Ethnicity

According to the 2010 Census, and as shown in Table 2-4, the City's and County's population has a greater proportion of Whites (74 and 77 percent, respectively), than the state average of 66 percent. The 2010 Census clarified the race and ethnicity distinction specifically in regards to persons of Hispanic or Latino origin. This distinction is significant, especially in states in the western United States near the Mexican border, and it reflects the substantial size of this minority group in Nevada. Washoe County has the lowest percentage of ethnic Hispanic or Latinos, with 22 percent of the population, compared to Sparks and the State of Nevada, which has 26 and 27 percent, respectively. African-Americans comprise 3 percent of the population of Sparks, and as with Washoe County, this is less than half the state average of 8 percent. The "Some Other Race" category of the Census constitutes approximately 10 percent of Washoe County's population; this is similar to the same category for Sparks and the state as a whole. The City, County, and State have similar small percentages of those who designate themselves as American Indian (between 1 and 2 percent), Asian (averaging about 6 percent), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander persons (less than 1 percent).

Table 2-4: Racial Composition

Area	White	African American	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races
City of Sparks	74%	3%	1%	6%	1%	11%	4%
Washoe County	77%	2%	2%	5%	1%	10%	4%
Nevada	66%	8%	1%	7%	1%	12%	5%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census, Summary File 1.

2.4 Residential Environment

2.4.1 Housing Stock, Tenure, Vacancy Rates, and Housing Values

In 2000, the housing stock in Sparks was comprised of 69.6 percent single-family residences. Study data from the 2010 Census indicates that within a 1-mile radius of the project area two-thirds (66 percent) of the housing units are owner-occupied, which is a higher percentage than that for the greater Reno-Sparks area, at 54 percent.

The average resale single-family home price in Sparks had a comparable month-to-month price decline from 2009 to 2010, ranging from between 7.7 and 13.5 percent. Monthly median prices in Sparks ranged from \$180,000 to \$200,000 in 2009 and declined to \$162,000 to \$170,000 in 2010.

In 2010, new single-family home sales in Washoe County had a sales rate of just 25 percent of their "normal" pace. The median sales price of new single-family homes in the county slipped another 11 percent in 2010 to just \$221,450, which is a 48 percent decline from the market's peak. Existing single-family home sales managed to increase 2.8 percent in 2010, while the median sales price dropped another 7 percent to \$171,900, largely as a result of short sales and bank-owned houses inundating the market.

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Sparks had a higher occupancy rate in 2010 than either Washoe County or the State of Nevada, as shown in Table 2-5. Persons per dwelling averaged 2.7 people in both owner-occupied and renter-occupied dwellings. The housing vacancy rate of 8 percent in Sparks and more than 10 percent in Washoe County is attributable to the poor economy and the proximity to seasonal ski resorts, which facilitates part-time residency.

Table 2-5: Occupied and Vacant Housing

Area	Occupied	Vacant	Persons per Owner-Occupied Dwelling	Persons per Renter-Occupied Dwelling
City of Sparks	92%	8%	2.7	2.7
Washoe County	88%	12%	2.6	2.5
Nevada	86%	14%	2.7	2.6

Source: 2010 U.S. Census, Summary File 1.

2.4.2 Access, Circulation, and Parking

Accessibility generally refers to the relative ease with which desired destinations can be reached, whether those ultimate destinations are for purposes of work, recreation, shopping, attending worship services, visiting family and friends, or any of the myriad of activities that require people to leave their residences. A transportation project may substantially improve the accessibility of some locations for individuals and reduce the accessibility of others. A location can be made more accessible by automobile, but made more difficult to reach for those without a car.

The average one-way commute time to work for those living in Sparks is 21 minutes, approximately 7 minutes less than the national average and 2 fewer minutes than the state average, with more than three-quarters of commuters driving to work alone. Approximately 13 percent of those residing in Sparks carpool to work with others. Three (3) percent of residents take local mass transit (i.e., bus) to work, and another 3 percent work from home. Parking is generally available throughout the project area; retail and commercial establishments within 0.5-mile of the proposed project appear to have ample parking for their customers.¹

Table 2-6: Average Commute Times to Work per Mode

Transportation	Sparks, Nevada	United States
COMMUTE MODE – Percentage Breakdown		
Auto (driver only)	78%	76.33%
Carpool	13%	12.15%
Mass Transit	2.60%	4.44%
Work at Home	2.50%	3.33%
COMMUTE TIME TO WORK		
Commute (average)	20.7 minutes	27.8 minutes

¹ Information accessed at www.bestplaces.net/transportation/metro/nevada/reno-sparks, August 5, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, Population and Housing Narrative Profile for Nevada, 2005-2009.

Transportation	Sparks, Nevada	United States
Commute less than 15 minutes	32.55%	28.88%
Commute 15 to 29 minutes	53.94%	36.09%
Commute 30 to 44 minutes	3.89%	19.38%
Commute 45 to 59 minutes	1.93%	7.59%
Commute great than 60 minutes	2.68%	8.06%

Information accessed at www.bestplaces.net/transportation/metro/nevada/reno-sparks, August 5, 2011

2.4.3 Public Transportation

RTC operates the RIDE program, which provides public transportation services to residents of Sparks through its fixed-route bus transit system; Sparks is served via seven bus routes, which together delivered 7.5 million rides in 2010. The closest bus service within convenient walking distance of the project area is Route 2.² Buses on this route are on a 30-minute schedule on weekdays until evenings, traverse between downtown Sparks' RTC Centennial Plaza and downtown Reno through a portion of the project area (see Figure 2-4), traveling north and south on Pyramid Way south of the project area, and along York Way parallel to McCarran Boulevard from 4th Street to Rock Boulevard. The closest transit stop to the project area is located on York Way at Pyramid. At this time, there is no bus service to and from the Spanish Springs Valley area to downtown Sparks.

RTC also operates ACCESS, which is the paratransit service that provides door-to-door, prescheduled transportation for people who meet the eligibility criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). RTC ACCESS passengers have disabilities that prevent them from riding RTC RIDE independently; ACCESS serves the entire city area of Sparks, including Spanish Springs Valley. The program served more than 241,000 people in 2008.

2.5 Community Facilities

Community facilities include those devoted to emergency and law enforcement services (e.g., fire, police, medical); educational; park/recreation areas; health care; and places of worship.

2.5.1 Law Enforcement, Fire, and Hospitals/Ambulance Services

The project area is served by the City of Sparks Police Department. The Department operates from 2 stations; it has 116 sworn police personnel (2010), with 29 marked police vehicles and 6 police motorcycles.

The City employs 96 firefighters (2010) that are deployed from 5 stations and divided into 6 response districts. The project area is located within Districts 1 and 2. The closest fire station in proximity to the project area is Fire Station 2, which is located at 2900 North Truckee Lane. It services Response District 2; Fire Station 1, which is also the headquarters for Sparks' fire department and is located at 1605 Victorian Avenue, services the neighborhoods within District 1. Fire service from Station 2 would likely travel west on McCarran Boulevard into the project

² Planners generally consider 0.25-mile to be "walking distance."

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area, whereas service from Station 1 would arrive traveling north on Pyramid Way. The emergency response time for the Sparks Fire Department averaged 5 minutes on a citywide basis in 2010; this has been close to the same average since at least 2001, never deviating by more than 30 seconds.³

The Reno-Sparks area has three private general hospitals: St. Mary's Regional Medical Center (235 W. Sixth Street, Reno), Renown Health (77 Pringle Way, Reno), and North Nevada Medical Center (2375 E. Prater Way, Sparks). The area also supports a Veteran's Administration Sierra Nevada Health Care System (1000 Locust Street, Reno). None of the four are located within 0.5-mile of the project area. Ambulance service is provided by the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA), a nonprofit entity that has an exclusive contract providing emergency services to Washoe County. This regional service has 42 ambulances in operation and also has a Care Flight service that includes support emergency helicopters, which is operated by AirMethods Corporation.

³ City of Sparks, *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report*, for Year Ending June 30, 2010, p. 150.



Figure 2-4
Community Facilities

2.5.2 Schools

Sparks' education system is served by the Washoe County School District. Nineteen (19) elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 3 high schools are located within Sparks. Two private schools also operate in the city. Total public school enrollment in Sparks was estimated to be 17,197 in 2010, a drop of more than 4,000 students from the 2007 peak enrollment levels. Florence Drake Elementary School is located at 2755 Fourth Street in the southeast quadrant of the project area; its enrollment was 345 students in the 2009-10 school year, down from 463 students 4 years earlier. The neighborhood located in the northeast quadrant is served by Lena Juniper Elementary School, located at 225 Queen Way; it had an enrolment of 515 in 2009-10, an increase of 64 students from 4 years earlier. Maxwell Elementary School, at 2300 Rock Boulevard (enrollment of 475 in 2009-10, an increase of 60 students over 2005-06 levels), and Sparks Middle School, at 2275 18th Street, are located in the southwest quadrant of the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection. Sparks Middle School had an enrollment of 710 in 2009-10, which is 10 fewer students than 4 years earlier. In the same time horizon, Reed High School's 2,319 enrollment figure represented 140 fewer students.⁴

Reed High School, located 3 miles east of the project area at 1350 Baring Boulevard, also serves the project area neighborhoods. The central campus of the University of Nevada – Reno, with approximately 19,000 enrolled students, is located 3 miles west of the project area; Truckee Meadows Community College, with approximately 10,000 enrolled students, is located in Reno, 4 miles northwest of the project area.

2.5.3 Parks and Recreation Facilities

Sparks has 48 parks, comprising 457 acres, and has plans for developing an additional 13 parks. Municipal recreational facilities within the general project area include the following, as depicted in Figure 2-4:

- Aimone Park – 55 Queen Way; opened in 1972. The park features two lighted tennis courts, a playground, softball field, and canopy with tables.
- Village Green Park – 849 Lepori Way; built in 1985. The 2.2-acre park includes a playground and basketball court.
- Burgess Park – 1605 Pyramid Way; opened in the 1960s and was originally called Northmore Park. The 6-acre property includes a skate park, lighted tennis courts, and a softball field.
- Church Park – 1850 1st Street, built in the 1970s. The 2.3-acre park has a playground and sports practice fields.
- City Recreation Center – 98 Richards Way. The Center, on a 5.4 acre parcel, includes a gym, picnic and barbecue area, and tables with canopies, and is situated adjacent to Church Park, built in the 1970s.

A public golf course, Wildcreek, is located approximately 0.5-mile northwesterly of the proposed project at 3500 Sullivan Lane. The facility is owned by the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority. Facilities include a clubhouse, bar and grill, and pro golf shop.

⁴ Washoe County School District, *Racial Ethnic Report*, 2009-10.

2.5.4 Churches

The Reno-Sparks area has many facilities devoted to religious worship, and as identified on Exhibit 2-4, several are located within 0.5-mile of the proposed project. Of these, four churches are worth noting because of their close proximity to the project area.

The Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, located at 2900 N. McCarran Boulevard, traces its origins to the founding of Sparks in 1905 and since 2005 has been in its present location. The church currently has 1,775 parishioners.

Though one of many Catholic churches in the Sparks-Reno area, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church is already somewhat of a regional landmark and is used by a myriad of Catholic activity organizations. The church parishioners, including Pastor Norman A. King, have been interested and involved in the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection project since the first public information meeting in May 2006.

The Lord of Mercy Lutheran Church, located at 3400 Pyramid Way, has been in its current location since 1967; the congregation formed to worship in this general Sparks area neighborhood in 1964 when it first met in a nearby bowling alley. Many members have been coming to the church at the current location for many years, and for them, it has become an important community anchor.

Two other churches, the First Christian Church of Sparks and the Reno Arc (Presbyterian) Mission Church, are located northeast of the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection, on Queen Way, nestled in the upper northwest corner of the Vista Del Oro neighborhood of Sparks, and they have been in their locations since the middle to late 1990s. Both hold regular Sunday services.

2.5.5 Other nearby Community Facilities

The Washoe County Senior Services facility at 97 Richards Way provides social activities and support for seniors. The Masonic Order, a fraternal organization with roots in the state of Nevada back to the 1860s, chartered its lodge in Sparks (“Benjamin Franklin Chapter”) at 2425 Pyramid Way in 1961.

2.5.6 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Some of the residents of the nearby neighborhoods walk or bike to local area churches, parks, schools, and retail businesses. While there are no formal walking paths, Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard within the project area do have sidewalks, as do most city streets in Sparks, according to the Public Works Department. McCarran Boulevard in the project area has a portion of the roadway shoulder designated as a bike lane by means of a white striped line and periodic pavement markings with a bicyclist symbol.⁵

⁵ City of Sparks, Comprehensive Plan – A Connected City. Draft, August, 2010, p. 5-2.

2.6 Economic Conditions

2.6.1 Community Tax Structure

The State of Nevada levies no personal or corporate income tax. The current sales tax in Washoe County is 7.725%. Total taxable sales within Washoe County dropped by 9.3 percent during the 2009-2010 fiscal year.⁶

All property is assessed at 35 percent of appraised or market value. The State of Nevada limits the rate of property tax to a ceiling total of \$3.64 for each \$100 of assessed valuation, with the City of Sparks opting for a lower rate of \$3.20 per \$100 of assessed value. Nevada has no classification system distinguishing different types of property (e.g., residential, commercial).⁷

Under the State of Nevada's "Freeport" statutes, merchandise that is warehoused, assembled, or processed in Nevada is exempt from taxes. As a result, many U.S. and foreign corporations have established distribution and manufacturing facilities in the Reno-Sparks area, including Amazon.com, General Motors, DuPont, International Game Technology, Ralston Foods, Barnes and Noble, Sherwin Williams, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Patagonia, and J.C. Penney, among many others.

2.6.2 Labor Force and Employment

Among the most common occupations among residents of Sparks, Nevada, are those related to management and professional (28 percent), sales and office (28 percent), and service (21 percent). Other occupations, including those related to transportation, production and warehousing (12 percent), and construction and maintenance (11 percent) top out the most common job classifications for Sparks residents.⁸

Some of the largest industries in Sparks have historically involved trade and construction. Wholesale trade now brings in slightly more revenue overall than does construction. As with many of the cities within Nevada, much of the Sparks economy is also supported by the tourism industry, which includes food service and hospitality-oriented firms. Health care and education round out the list of the most important occupational industries in Sparks. The ten largest private employers in Sparks, ranked in order of number of employees, are as following:⁹

- Sparks Nugget Hotel and Casino
- United Parcel Service (UPS)
- Western Village Inn & Casino
- Henry Schein, Inc. (dental equipment)
- Wal-Mart Supercenter
- Northern Nevada Medical Center
- Rail City Casino
- Baldini's Sports Casino

⁶ City of Sparks, *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report*, Year Ended June 30, 2010; Johnson-Perkins and Associates, *Market Analysis for Pyramid & McCarran Intersection*, July 15, 2011, p. 28.

⁷ Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada Web site www.nevadanet.com, accessed August 8, 2011.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Selected Economic Characteristics, 2005-2009.

⁹ From information collected by the Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (March 2010).

- Arrow Electronics
- K-Mart Distribution Center

The only two area employers who can count more than 1,000 people in their employ are Sparks Nugget, Inc., and UPS, Inc. Most Sparks-Reno area employers are much smaller business operations. More than three-quarters of all business establishments in Washoe County employed fewer than 10 employees as of 2008.¹⁰

The unemployment rate for Washoe County and Nevada has historically averaged between 1 and 2 percent below the national average, but in recent years with the subprime effect on housing foreclosures, the state's unemployment has been among the worst in the U.S. According to the City of Sparks Finance Department, the City is "preparing for a significant and protracted recessionary period" for the local economy. In 5 years' time, unemployment in Washoe County jumped from 4.2 to 14.9 percent (December 2005 to December 2010). The accompanying chart (Figure 2-5) graphically depicts the dramatic shift in the employment rate in the Reno-Sparks area. The employment picture is not projected to substantially improve for the region in the near future.¹¹

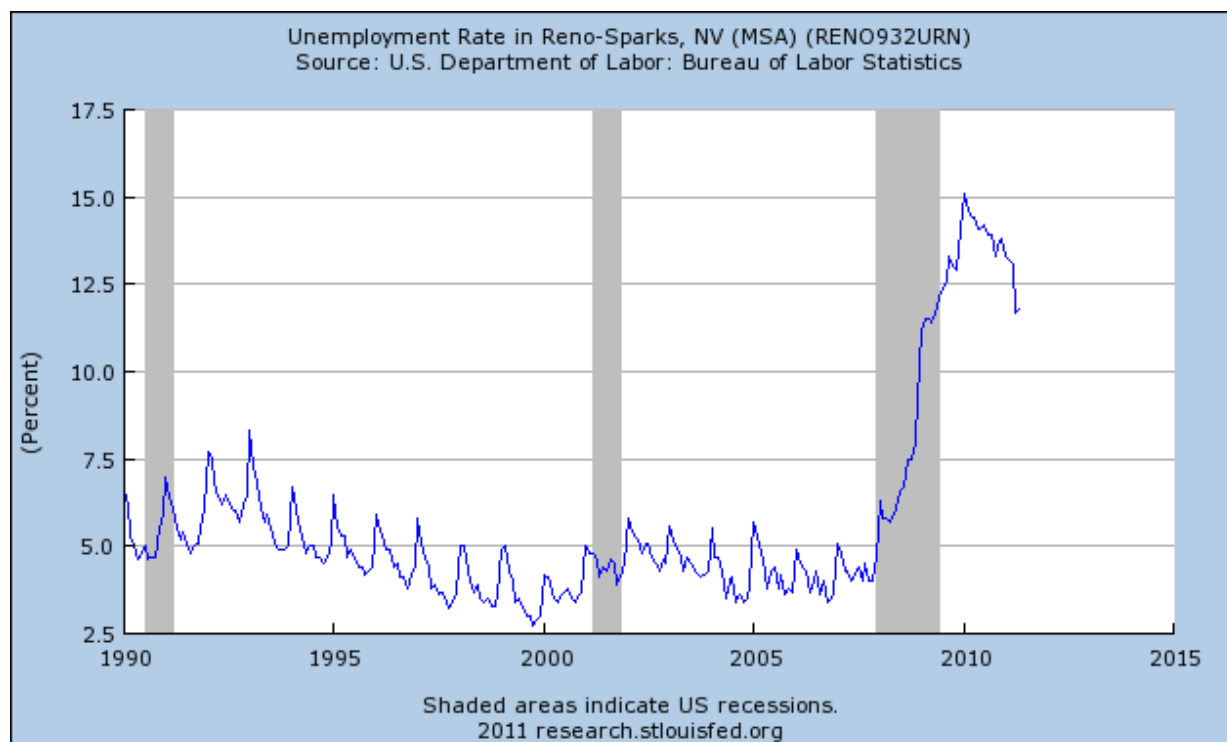


Figure 2-5
Unemployment Rate in Reno-Sparks, NV (MSA)

¹⁰ Applied Geographic Solutions, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2008, provided by NV Energy Economic Development Department.

¹¹ Washoe County, 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, Appendix A – Land Use – Page A-4, City of Sparks, November 21, 2008; *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report*, Year Ended June 30, 2010; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment data accessed August 7, 2011.

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3. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section discusses the potential effects of the proposed project on the community. Potential impacts discussed include temporary and construction-related impacts, as well as long-term operational impacts to the surrounding community.

In conformance with NEPA guidelines, the No Build Alternative represents the scenario in which the 2040 RTP improvements are implemented, with the exception of improvements at the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection. The Build Alternative is described in Section 1.3.1 of this report.

Future traffic conditions in the study area are projected to have a significant increase in automobile traffic due to the residential and commercial development in the Spanish Springs area to the north of Sparks. Expanded traffic volumes may cause an increase in neighborhood traffic and “cut through” traffic for residents of the Village Green neighborhood as drivers look for ways to avoid the bottlenecks.

3.1 Consistency with Local and Regional Plans and Policies

The Build Alternative is consistent with plans and policies adopted by the City of Sparks, the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, and RTC. In particular, the proposed project is consistent with the overarching goals and policies as set forth in the City of Sparks Comprehensive Plan, which is in the process of being updated; the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, which was last updated in 2007; and the RTP of Washoe County, which was approved in 2008.

By reducing travel time during peak hours between the residential and commercial areas located north of Queen Way and metropolitan Sparks-Reno, the project would decrease driver commute times; however, this potential travel time savings is not considered substantial enough that people or businesses would give weight to this factor alone as a rationale for moving or shifting operations from one part of the region to another. Therefore, this project is not considered growth-inducing. The project would not open up new areas to development, nor is it expected to lead to changes in land use or rezoning.

Specifically, as per the City of Sparks Comprehensive Plan:

Policy CC 2.5: *In older parts of Sparks, the City will seek opportunities to make multimodal the local streets and to make them more attractive, pedestrian friendly.*

Consistent. This policy reflects an understanding that good planning recognizes that streets can sometimes be designed and re-engineered to accommodate more than just the automobile. The Comprehensive Plan does not show specifically either Pyramid Way or McCarran Boulevard, which are technically State Routes 445 and 659, targeted as complete streets; however, RTC and NDOT are working closely with the City of Sparks to bring improvements to the intersection that will incorporate context-sensitive design solutions to produce an intersection that is visually attractive, and bring about beneficial

3. Environmental Consequences

safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists, which include provisions for bicycle lanes and sidewalks with adjacent landscaping.

Policy CC 3.1: *The City will work with RTC and NDOT to ensure the City's goals and policies are considered in the design of new roadways or improvements to existing roadways.*

Consistent. RTC has worked closely with the City and NDOT, who are members of the proposed project's Technical Advisory Committee, since the outset of the project and will continue to do so.

Policy CC 3.2: *The City will maintain an active presence in regional and state-level transportation planning activities (such as improvements to I-80 or Pyramid Way) to identify opportunities for joint planning/construction efforts, enhanced levels of service, and monitoring impacts on the City.*

Consistent. RTC has worked closely with the City and NDOT, who are members of the proposed project's Technical Advisory Committee, since the outset of the project and will continue to do so.

Policy CC 3.3: *The City will require that proposed road improvements be reviewed by all permitting departments to ensure design and construction comply with the Complete Street standards.*

Consistent. RTC understands the City's interest level in the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection project remains high and will submit all necessary applications for permits and any needed approvals to meet conditions and stipulations.

3.2 Social Impacts

3.2.1 Population Impacts

Under the Build Alternative, potential residential displacements would occur in Census Tracts 29.01 and 29.02, as depicted in Figure 1-3. Based on the average household size of 2.7 persons within Sparks (based on 2010 estimates), the displacement of up to 68 single-family residential structures would potentially cause the displacement of approximately 183 persons residing in Sparks (see Section 3.4). This potential change in population would be considered minor in the context of the overall population of Sparks and would represent .002 percent of the city's total population. As to the socioeconomic status of the residents of the displaced homes, demographic information from the U.S. Census indicates that the affected nearby neighborhoods are not largely dissimilar from that of the city as a whole in terms of the population of elderly persons or low-income persons. Three of the project area Census Tract Block Groups (see Table 4-1 in Section 4, *Environmental Justice*) have a larger percentage of minority populations compared to Washoe County and the State of Nevada.

3.2.2 Community Cohesion Effects

Community cohesion is defined as the degree to which residents have a "sense of belonging" to their neighborhood; a level of commitment of the residents of the community; or a strong attachment to neighbors, groups, or institutions, usually because of continued association over

time. Cohesive communities are indicated by various types of social characteristics, such as long average lengths of residency, home ownership, frequent personal contact, ethnic homogeneity, high levels of community activity, and shared goals. Transportation projects may divide cohesive neighborhoods when such projects act as physical barriers or are perceived as psychological barriers by residents. A transportation project perceived as a physical or psychological barrier may isolate one portion of a homogeneous neighborhood.

Sparks, as a whole, would probably be viewed as containing moderately cohesive neighborhoods. Residents of the city are likely to see each other frequently at nearby grocery stores and restaurants, as well as during school functions and while attending services at local churches; however, with families relocating in increasing numbers, as evidenced by school attendance drops approaching 20 percent in Sparks in just 4 years, and with housing foreclosures up and employment down, there has most probably been a slight decrease in community cohesiveness in Sparks in recent years.

Widening a small segment of Pyramid Way by two lanes within the project limits would increase the sense of separation between a segment of the neighborhood, especially to the residential area located east of Pyramid Way and south of McCarran Boulevard (see Figures 1-2a through 1-2d). Removing the first row of residential properties on Nelson Way and Gault Way would separate the remaining residences from those that were formerly located across the street from them and with whom many may have formed previous relationships and acquaintances. This may place a psychological and social burden on those who are immediately impacted. This is difficult to quantify, but these situations are typically more challenging for households that have elderly adults or younger children; therefore, the project would alter community cohesiveness between the neighborhoods. However, for each of the entire neighborhoods (as an integrated whole), this effect would likely be fairly minor because Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard are already busy thoroughfares that act to separate these areas, and it has served to discourage interaction between the physically close but distinct neighborhoods. The character of the neighborhood west of Pyramid Way is somewhat different than the one to the east of it, as are the neighborhoods nestled north and south of McCarran Boulevard. In addition, the suburban residential neighborhoods located north of McCarran Boulevard have a more affluent feel to them because they are located on larger-size parcels on average, with somewhat more extensive landscaping, and the housing is of more recent construction. Widening Pyramid Way north of McCarran Boulevard would not dramatically change the sense of separation of the two neighborhood areas of Village Green (to the west) and Vista Del Oro (to the east) because traffic on the busy roadway already acts to discourage interaction between the two neighborhoods; virtually no pedestrian activity occurs at this location because of the heavy, fast-moving traffic and short sight distances due to the raised roadway grade.

Widening McCarran Boulevard west of Pyramid Way would not create a sense of separation between the areas lying north and south of the project area because there is less of a neighborhood feel as more properties are devoted to other land uses, including commercial properties (to the south) and a large church (to the north). The neighborhoods east of Pyramid Way, however, would be exposed to increased noise and visual impacts due to the removal of those parcels that include dense landscaping and mature trees that previously would have acted as a screen and visual filter. The existing houses remaining on the streets where buildings would

3. Environmental Consequences

have been removed would now have a view towards the new intersection, except in areas of the project where soundwalls are being constructed as mitigation.

Many of the factors used to gauge cohesion tend to be subjective and hard to quantify, but social scientists over time have developed some readily available tools. One measuring stick used to determine cohesiveness is to look at ethnic enclaves by identifying nativity and language statistics. Fifteen (15) percent of the people living in Sparks are foreign born based upon the most recent data available (i.e., U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2005-2009), which is a smaller percentage than the 19 percent of the State of Nevada population who are foreign born, with both being larger than the national average of 12 percent.

Most of the project area contained populations who self-reported that they spoke English exclusively. In analyzing the two Census Tracts in which residential displacements would occur under the Build Alternative (i.e., 29.01 and 29.02), 84 and 70 percent, respectively, of the people over 5 years of age in those households speak English exclusively. Still, a percentage of the project area in which the residential displacements would occur under the Build Alternative had households that were “linguistically isolated.” The Census considers “linguistically isolated” households as those whose members report speaking English less than “very well.” Approximately 5 percent of the households in Census Tract 29.01 had limited English proficiency (LEP); in Census Tract 29.02, 18 percent of the households had LEP. The Spanish language is spoken in most of those households that have people who are linguistically isolated. On a citywide basis, 76 percent of the households in Sparks reported that they speak English exclusively, with 19 percent of the population reporting that they spoke English less than “very well.”¹²

A lack of proficiency in speaking English may isolate these particular households from their English-speaking neighbors. On the other hand, based on studies of Spanish-speaking residents in other American communities, those who speak Spanish are likely to be extremely cohesive as a unit, relying on one another for job referrals, sharing in child care, and socializing and recreation.

Another way to consider cohesiveness is to look at how long people on average reside in their neighborhoods. Sociologists note that people who stay in the same location tend to be more committed to their community. According to U.S. Census data, 43 percent of the residents of Census Tract 29.01 and 44 percent of Census Tract 29.02, the two affected tracts that may experience residential displacements under the Build Alternative, had moved into their houses before 1990. These numbers reflect relatively stable neighborhoods compared to others within the boundaries of the city because they represent approximately four times the citywide average of 11 percent. This is largely due to the tremendous amount of physical expansion and population growth that Sparks has experienced since 1990. The two affected Census Tracts are closer in alignment with the averages of Washoe County at 48 percent and statewide average of 45 percent of residents who had moved into their houses prior to 1990. Approximately two-thirds of project study residents are homeowners.¹³

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, Selected Social Characteristics, 2005-2009. Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate shown here is a 90 percent margin of error.

¹³ Ibid.

While it is by no means perfect, another recent tool to help better gauge neighborhoods is “Walk Score,”¹⁴ which is an interactive online mechanism that allows one to enter addresses and automatically receive a score from 1 to 100, based on proximity to a number of available neighborhood services and amenities. Addresses from the project’s nearby street neighborhoods, such as Gault Way and Nelson Way, produce a score in the 70s, which indicates a “Very Walkable” neighborhood.

Therefore, the overall effects of the Build Alternative on community cohesion are expected to be moderate; while parcels containing rows of housing are removed from the existing housing stock, most of each of the tract developments would remain intact, and the two busy roadways being widened for a short distance for this intersection improvement project already serve to separate the existing neighborhoods. Percentage-wise, only a small proportion of area residents are likely to be displaced and, as discussed below, existing relocation resources should be sufficient for those people who choose to move back into their community.

3.2.3 Access, Circulation, and Parking Impacts

Locations within the study area could experience temporary disruptions to existing travel patterns during construction activities. This could result in potentially adverse impacts due to lane restrictions, lane closures, or temporary detours and, in turn, affect other major local roads and streets within the study area, including Sparks Boulevard, Greenbrae Drive, Oddie Boulevard, Rock Boulevard, and some nearby collector streets, due to possible increases in traffic volumes as motorists utilize alternate routes to compensate for the closures or restrictions caused by work at the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection. Additionally, other regional travel patterns could also be affected due to construction-caused delays and partial road restrictions, possibly extending to I-80 at peak periods.

Depending on the duration and time of project construction, which is expected to last between 12 and 18 months, limited and temporary impacts to local travel patterns and traffic flow along Pyramid Way, McCarran Boulevard, and some adjacent city streets are likely to occur. Residents of the nearby developments can currently only gain access to the Sparks Mercantile Shopping Center from two intersections along Pyramid Way and one driveway on McCarran Boulevard. As outlined in the traffic studies, traffic patterns along study area roads may experience temporary impacts due to roadway closures, lane restrictions, and detours. Depending on the time of day when construction occurs, and the extent and duration of construction activities, residents of the Village Green and Vista Del Oro developments located north of McCarran Boulevard could experience longer wait times to enter and exit the neighborhood during construction. This could result in additional traffic impacts within the housing developments themselves. Measures to minimize access and traffic impacts during construction activities will be implemented as part of a traf.

Motorist safety is a concern for study area residents. Accident rates at the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection currently exceed the statewide average for similar locations,

¹⁴ www.walkscore.com

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and statistics indicate that this is the number one location for accidents in Sparks.¹⁵ A total of 175 collisions were recorded in the 2005-2010 period. According to NDOT and the Sparks Police Department, most accidents (74 percent) are due to rear-end “stop and go” collisions, primarily occurring as motorists prepare to turn right from SB Pyramid Way to WB McCarran Boulevard. An additional 8 percent involved sideswipe accidents. Implementation of the Build Alternative may be considered to have a positive impact with respect to motorist safety. Improvements to traffic circulation at the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection would also reduce congestion along other local roads throughout the study area, including Wedekind Way, because motorists would be less likely to use local roads as shortcuts as they do now to avoid congestion at the intersection. This should help make residential areas safer for pedestrians and joggers.

As part of the design features of the Build Alternative, 10-foot-wide roadway shoulders would be included along McCarran Boulevard to accommodate bicyclists and allow them to more safely utilize the street facility; therefore, implementation of the Build Alternative would likely result in positive impacts to travel patterns for bicyclists. The implementation of roadway shoulders for bicyclists would generally improve their access to community facilities as well.

Parking

With the exception of on-street parking fronting those residential properties that would be acquired as part of the right-of-way (ROW) needed for project improvements, it is not anticipated that any other parking spaces would be temporarily or permanently removed. Parking supply would remain unchanged under the No Build Alternative.

3.3 Community Facilities

3.3.1 Impacts on Law Enforcement, Fire, and Hospitals/Ambulance Services

During construction, potential impacts on public service providers, including police, fire, and emergency services and hospitals, may include short-term increased emergency response times caused by congestion during project construction, temporary lane closure or road closures, and traffic detours. All facilities would be open during the construction period, although, at times, response times may be temporarily slowed because of lane closures.

Public services in the study area would be largely unaffected by operation of the proposed project under the Build Alternative. Existing access would be maintained and, in some locations, enhanced by implementation of the project. The project is anticipated to ultimately improve police, fire, and emergency vehicle response times to the nearby neighborhoods within the general study area by relieving peak-period bottlenecks of traffic and improving roadway safety.

According to the relocation study prepared for the project, the relocation of residents from approximately 68 household dwellings and 6 nonresidential properties (see Section 3.4) is anticipated to occur in already well-established neighborhoods within the Reno/Sparks area;

¹⁵ City of Sparks Police Department and NDOT Traffic and Safety Division data for the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection.

therefore, it would not create a new burden on public safety services requiring any expansion or modification of police, fire, or medical staffing or facilities.

3.3.2 Impacts on Schools

There are two schools within the immediate vicinity of the project: Drake Elementary and Juniper Elementary. Students living in the affected project area also may attend Maxwell Elementary, Sparks Middle School, and Reed High School.

The funding of K-12 public schools in the State of Nevada is derived from a combination of state (40 percent), local (55 percent), and federal (5 percent) sources. Under the Distributive School Account, the State is required to “supplement local financial ability to whatever extent necessary” and provide the means by which Nevada meets its guaranteed financial support to school districts under the Nevada Plan, which represents the state’s guarantee and legislative declaration “that the proper objective of state financial aid to public education is to ensure each Nevada child a reasonably equal opportunity.” The local portion of the formula calls for generating the revenues for funding public schools from two sources: (a) a county-specific and apportioned 2.25 percent Local School Support Tax (sales) and (b) a 1/3 public schools operating property tax. Property taxes comprised approximately 29 percent of school revenues in 2010.¹⁶

The total assessed valuation of all property in Sparks was \$15,099,476 in 2010. Based on an estimated reduction in assessed valuation from properties removed from the tax roll because of displacement (i.e., worst-case scenario removal of 68 residential and 6 nonresidential properties—see below), at the City of Sparks tax rate of 0.9161 per \$100 of assessed value, approximately \$152,640 would be reduced from State revenues, as provided in the Nevada Plan (State-aid guaranteed) funding would necessarily increase in the short run to make up any gap.

3.4 Relocation Impacts

Current market data (as of July 2011) indicate that there are adequate resources in Sparks to accommodate relocation of the residential and nonresidential displacements resulting from the proposed project. A full inventory of available relocation resources and a correlation with the housing and nonresidential units projected to be acquired for this project will be conducted and identified if the Build Alternative is recommended, the Environmental Impact Statement completed, and a Record of Decision issued.

3.4.1 Residential Displacement

An estimated 68 single-family detached housing units would be subject to relocation under the Build Alternative, as shown in Table 3-1. This assumption represents the maximum number of potential displacements. Additionally, eventual ROW negotiations with property owners losing only portions of backyards may result in instances in which some property owners insist on acquisition of their entire properties while others are willing to forsake portions of their backyards but still desire to retain their homes. For these reasons, it is difficult to precisely determine the number of housing units that would be displaced by the project. For analytical

¹⁶ Nevada Revised Statutes 387.121-.122; State of Nevada. Department of Education. *Nevada Education Quick Facts*, January 2007, p. 8; Washoe County School District, *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report*, For Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2010, pp. 8-9; 178-180.

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purposes of this report, a worst-case approach was taken in which it is assumed that an entire property is acquired. Table 3-2 lists the properties by Assessor's Parcel Number (APN).

**Table 3-1: Residential and Nonresidential Acquisitions/Partial Acquisitions
under the Build Alternative**

	Single-Family Units	Mobile Homes	Multi- Family	Estimated Total Housing Units/Residents	Nonresidential Parcels (Total Number/Employees)
Totals	68	0	0	68/183	6/31

Notes: This table represents a worst-case scenario should all properties need to be fully relocated. Estimate of residents based on an average household size of 2.7 residents per unit for Sparks (Census estimates, January 2010, Center for Regional Studies). Estimate of employees is based on the average number of paid workers for the particular industry, as per the 2007 Economic Census for Washoe County and/or the United States, depending on availability; certain data is suppressed by the Census Bureau to maintain confidentiality. No households or businesses were contacted for the information in this table.

Table 3-2: Residential Displacement

APN	Location	Type	Type of Loss
028-201-21	4th Street	Detached, Single-Family Residence	Potential displacement requiring relocation
028-201-02 028-201-03 028-201-04 028-201-05 028-201-06 028-201-07 028-201-08 028-201-09 028-201-10 028-201-11 028-201-12 028-201-13 028-201-14 028-201-19 028-201-20 028-201-23 028-203-01	Gault Way	Detached, Single-Family Residences	Potential displacements requiring relocation

Table 3-2: Residential Displacement

APN	Location	Type	Type of Loss
028-203-02 028-203-03 028-203-04 028-203-05 028-203-06 028-203-07 028-203-12 028-203-13 028-203-10 028-221-07 028-221-06 028-221-05 028-221-04 028-221-03 028-221-02 028-221-01 028-271-02 028-271-03 028-271-04 028-271-05 028-271-06 028-271-07 028-271-08 028-271-09	Nelson Way	Detached, Single-Family Residences	Potential displacements requiring relocation
028-221-01 028-271-01	York Way	Detached, Single-Family Residences	Potential displacements requiring relocation
028-153-24 028-153-23 028-153-22 028-153-21 028-153-20 028-153-19 028-153-18 028-153-17 028-153-25	Lenwood Drive	Detached, Single-Family Residences	Potential displacements requiring relocation
028-153-29 028-153-30 028-153-31 028-153-32 028-153-33 028-153-34 028-153-35 028-133-05 028-133-02 028-133-01 028-411-31 028-411-32	Sprout Way	Detached, Single-Family Residences	Potential displacements requiring relocation
028-411-40	Mercy Court	Detached, Single-Family	Potential displacement requiring relocation

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Table 3-2: Residential Displacement

APN	Location	Type	Type of Loss
		Residence	
028-011-33 028-011-35 028-011-38	Gwynelle Court	Detached, Single-Family Residences	Potential displacements requiring relocation

All potential residential displacements would occur on properties located within Sparks, with most of the houses located either in the southeast corner or northeast corner of two of the quadrants formed by the intersection of Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard. Most of the affected houses¹⁷ range in size from 912 to 1,594 square feet and typically have three or four bedrooms, one or two baths, attached garages, and were constructed in the 1960s. Slightly less than 25 percent of the residential properties the project may displace are somewhat larger residential structures, ranging in size between 1,600 and 2,650 square feet; these houses tend to date from the early 1970s. The median value of housing in the two adjacent Census Tracts in which relocations are anticipated to occur was \$244,400 for Tract 29.01 and \$223,400 for Tract 29.02.¹⁸ These values do not necessarily reflect what would likely be the then-current value of affected properties at the time of their acquisition. Full appraisals to determine the actual market value of each property to be relocated, based on current market conditions, would be conducted prior to acquisition.

The maximum total of 68 houses that may be subject to displacement should the Build Alternative be implemented would represent less than .01 percent of the total number of 7,792 single-family residential houses calculated to be located within a 1-mile radius of the project study area.¹⁹

Based on Census data, the average household size for Sparks is estimated to be 2.7 persons; therefore, it is estimated that approximately 183 people would be subject to relocation.²⁰

Relocation impacts are the most sensitive community-related effects associated with this and all transportation improvements because they may involve modifying relationships with people and their homes and neighbors. The displacement of families and households from neighborhoods not only affect those being relocated, but also those who remain residing in the affected neighborhood. In conducting their research in July 2011, the relocation study specialists for this project did not find that there were any extraordinary conditions or special neighborhood issues of concern that would require property acquisition and relocation advisory services above and beyond the standard requirements set forth in the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as Amended. Information pertaining to which transportation modes those who may be potentially displaced currently use to commute to work, or other

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2005-2009. Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from sampling variability is represented through the use of a margin of error. The value shown here is the 90 percent margin of error.

¹⁹ Johnson-Perkins and Associates, *Market Analysis for Pyramid & McCarran Intersection*, July 15, 2011.

²⁰ The estimate of residents per household is based on Census data analyzed by the Center for Regional Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno in January, 2010.

specific information, will be obtained in one-on-one interviews conducted with property owners and tenants in the right-of-way negotiation phase once the environmental document has been finalized and a Record of Decision issued. Additional or unusual circumstances may warrant other mitigation measures on a case-by-case basis.

It is reasonable to assume that displaced persons would seek replacement housing that is similar in location, cost, and character to their displaced homes. This would allow displaced persons to preserve their community ties, send their children to the same schools, and minimize disruption in their employment and personal activities; however, actual relocation decisions may vary according to personal preferences and economic and housing market conditions at the time of displacement.

RTC, in partnership with NDOT and FHWA, is required to provide relocation assistance. Assistance would include, but not be limited to, moving and re-establishment expenses.

NDOT would be responsible for acquiring all property necessary for the required ROW to implement the project. NDOT has advised that the acquisition procedures will permit it to pursue an administrative settlement that will make up the difference between a property's fair market value and the outstanding mortgage, if the appraised value of the property is less than the mortgage.

No occupants would be required to relocate until comparable – and decent, safe, and sanitary – replacement housing has been made available to them.

3.4.2 Nonresidential Displacement

None of the estimated eight nonresidential properties listed in Table 3-3 are involved in commercial or retail sales or would be considered service establishments. No heavy industrial operations, farmlands, or public services have been identified for displacement by the Build Alternative.

Table 3-3: Nonresidential Displacement

APN	Street	Property Type	Land Area (acres)	Year Built
028-411-50	Pyramid Way	Church	1.74	1966
028-411-52	Queen Way	Vacant Land	2.47	N/A
028-011-52	Queen Way	Office	0.40	2000
028-011-53	Queen Way	Office	0.27	2000
028-011-54	Queen Way	Office	0.44	2000
028-011-40	Queen Way	Church; Residence	1.79	1904; 1966
028-011-39	Queen Way	Church; Preschool	2.50	1965
028-012-19	SR 445 (NW corner, Pyramid Way and Queen Way)	Vacant Land	2.40	N/A

Based on the average number of employees for the six business and churches that may be directly affected, in a worst-case scenario assuming the Build Alternative would require full

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ROW acquisitions, approximately 31 paid employees would be displaced by the project.²¹ A market analysis conducted for this project as part of the relocation plan indicates the current assessed net values of these nonresidential displacements, including land and improvement values, ranges from \$2.9 million to \$3.2 million.²²

As reflected in Table 3-3, three properties subject to direct relocation impacts involve houses of worship within the proposed ROW acquisition area. The proposed ROW acquisition of portions of two parcels located on Queen Way would affect both the First Christian Church of Sparks and the Reno Arc Mission Church, but neither is expected to be a consequential displacement because the engineering designs call for only a minor amount of land from each property to be acquired for roadway purposes and the project is not anticipated to alter their use of the land. A full acquisition for a third religious property, the Lord of Mercy Lutheran Church located at 3400 Pyramid Way, may likely be required with implementation of the Build Alternative.

The project may also require land from three commercial office properties located on Queen Way, just east of Pyramid Way the assumption for the purposes of the following analysis is that they will be displaced. These offices on Queen Way currently support a real estate office (028-011-52), an insurance firm (028-011-53), and a former medical office facility that currently stands vacant (028-011-54). The three offices appear to have plenty of off-street surface parking, and each is located in buildings constructed in 2000.

Business firms are often profitable because they have built up a loyal clientele over time. Relocation to a new area may require time to re-establish a customer base. This time period may be shorter for well-known firms with national name or local recognition. Service-oriented businesses, such as real estate offices and insurance firms, are less likely to rely on pass-by traffic to generate new drop-in business (compared to other land use types, such as gasoline service stations and restaurants, which depend more on being visible by the driver) because they are considered “destination” enterprises, and attracting new business clients is usually, but not always, done as a result of other types of marketing approaches.

Relocation of a business may result in unemployment and associated financial impacts. If the company can relocate within the same general area and remain viable, the effects of unemployment would likely be temporary. Neither of the two businesses potentially displaced by the project is considered to be a major employer in the Sparks area. It is expected that both businesses would be able to relocate within the general area. The third business office, currently a vacant medical office, may have difficulty in renting its space if the perception is that a proposed transportation project may cause its displacement within 2 or 3 years. A recent real estate property study prepared for this project found the current vacancy rate for offices in Sparks to be more than 20 percent, suggesting that if current economic trends hold, there will be sufficient nearby locations to accommodate any of these businesses.²³

²¹ Select data derived from the 2007 Economic Census for Washoe County, Nevada.

²² Property Specialists, Inc., Pyramid Way & McCarran Boulevard Intersection Improvement EIS Acquisition/Relocation Plan, July 26, 2011.

²³ Johnson-Perkins and Associates, *Market Analysis for Pyramid & McCarran Intersection*, July 15, 2011.

Nonresidential properties identified for possible acquisition were subjected to a preliminary field survey to determine their general characteristics. A full assessment of all affected nonresidential uses would be conducted prior to their acquisition to determine their specific characteristics and values. The individual owners of all affected businesses would be interviewed prior to acquisition to determine the specific needs of each displacement. It is anticipated that the relocation assistance payments would reduce potential impacts to nonresidential properties, and no further mitigation is proposed.

3.5 Economic Impacts

The economic impacts of the project include potential local tax revenue effects; business impacts, including related employment effects; and construction-related economic impacts. These impacts are described in the following sections.

3.5.1 Local Tax Revenue

A potential tax revenue impact of the Build Alternative would result from the conversion of private residences and business properties to public ROW for the project. Although the project may result in an initial loss of property tax revenues for the City of Sparks and Washoe County, this potential impact would be temporary while residents and businesses relocate following acquisition of their property, though FHWA found in a limited number of studies that approximately 25 percent of businesses displaced by a project opt to close shop altogether rather than relocate. It cannot be predicted what would happen as a result of relocations by this project.

3.5.2 Local Business Impacts

During construction of the Build Alternative, which is estimated to last from between twelve and eighteen months, neighborhood-oriented businesses may experience temporary and likely minor adverse economic impacts as a direct result of disruptions to traffic flow and existing traffic patterns. Currently, the shopping plazas and businesses located on Pyramid Way and other nearby streets primarily serve residents who live in the immediate and surrounding areas. Potentially affected businesses include, but are not limited to, those in the Sparks Mercantile Shopping Center located in the southwest quadrant of the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection, which is a primary and highly visible junction. The center, anchored by a Raley's Supermarket and Pharmacy, also includes a Bully's Sports Bar & Grill, Starbucks, and McDonald's (see Figure 2-4), as well as a dozen other local retail businesses, including a Winner's Corner Chevron gasoline station and car wash. Sparks Mercantile would likely have their current driveway from and to McCarran Boulevard realigned by the proposed project. Shopping center access from and to McCarran Boulevard would be modified but not closed.

Destination-oriented businesses provide services for the local community and are those that people set out to go to intentionally. This includes Sparks Mercantile because it has a host of businesses, such as salon, cleaners, optical, insurance, banking, and food services, in addition to a supermarket. These are less likely to experience substantial adverse economic impacts during construction, even if there are temporary disruptions, as long as access is not completely closed off or made too difficult and they continue to have visibility from the traveled roadway.

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In addition, it appears that very few, if any, of the other businesses located adjacent to Pyramid Way are dependent upon patrons who travel along the roadway and spontaneously pull over to impulse buy. Most businesses provide general services to the community, and many of them relate to various health and medical services; a handful of others are also not dependent on pass-by traffic, including a bank and a veterinary hospital. To some extent, a women's apparel shop located at 2161 Pyramid Way and a Kwik Serv gasoline service station at 2191 Pyramid Way are likely to be more dependent on pass-by automobile traffic to generate sales revenues; therefore, they are dependent on existing travel patterns. Those business enterprises that do not rely on pass-by traffic are less likely to experience short-term adverse economic impacts during construction.

The viability of the affected businesses is likely to be largely unaffected during operation of the project, but with improvements to access and operational efficiencies of the intersection, the project should result in long-term retention of consumer patronage; however, it cannot be precisely quantified what net effect the proposed Build Alternative may have on these businesses. While access to businesses will continue as the project is constructed, additional efforts may be warranted to alert existing and potential customers that businesses remain open (see further discussion below). Eventually, the reduction in congestion at the intersection may well lead to an increase in patronage for these businesses.

While the Build Alternative presents minimal direct impacts to businesses, the disruption of residential housing and potential displacement of up to 68 dwelling units, or an estimated 183 persons, would further reduce the number of customers who would access any of these businesses and therefore could also result in a slight economic impact, though this population represents less than .014 percent of all people who live within 1-mile of the shopping center, or other nearby business enterprises. Likewise, residents who could be displaced as a result of the Build Alternative may have to find replacement housing in an area not as conveniently located to these services along Pyramid Way, including the retail shops in Sparks Mercantile and the Greenbrae Center and other nearby commercial properties, and therefore they may shift some of their purchasing decisions to retail establishments closer to their new locations.

Currently there is little information that quantifies the estimated business-related impacts due to highway construction projects, and none that is specific to Nevada. However, in a multi-year study conducted by the University of Wyoming, and sponsored by the Wyoming Department of Transportation and FHWA²⁴, researchers contacted the Department of Transportation (DOT) for each of the fifty states and discovered that the main issue revolves around maintaining property access during construction. Most DOTs tried to provide unabated access to businesses by providing detour access points. If access cannot be provided, businesses were generally financially compensated for the temporary closure. Other mitigation techniques associated with business access include special signing and different colored directional cones (e.g., blue instead of the standard orange). Many DOTs also use financial incentives and disincentives in construction contracts an attempt to minimize the time involved in disruption to businesses, and the community in general. Finally, the researchers found a key factor in many cases to avoid or

²⁴ University of Wyoming, *Highway Construction Related Business Impacts, Phase I, II, and III*. 2004-2008.

minimize construction-related impacts to businesses was to keep a continual line of communication open between the business community and transportation agencies, from the beginning of the project planning and continuing through the construction period. This can be accomplished by holding regularly scheduled public information meetings.

3.5.3 Fiscal Impacts

The removal of up to 68 residences and 6 nonresidential business structures and the acquisition of ROW for the proposed action would result in a percentage loss of property tax revenue for the affected local agencies. Acquisition of land and structures currently in private ownership would result in these properties being removed from the property tax rolls, with the revenue loss spread across several government agencies and districts. Based on the current assessed value of private properties that would be acquired under the Build Alternative (assumes full acquisition of all parcels in which there would be structural displacements), assessed valuations would be reduced by an estimated \$11.6 million (total taxable property value) in Sparks and Washoe County.

The project could also affect sales tax revenues generated, should there be a drop-off in trade during construction. However, most of the goods and services would be expected to be sold elsewhere in Sparks should people choose to shop elsewhere, rather than postpone their purchases altogether.

3.5.4 Employment Impacts

If offsite relocation of the nonresidential properties is not possible, based on average employment for the type of industry represented, it is estimated the Build Alternative would result in the loss of an estimated 31 jobs. This estimate has been calculated based on the number of paid workers for the particular industry using the most recent Economic Census data available (2007), which is collected by the U.S. Census Bureau every five years. The business services currently associated with the real estate office and insurance business, however, would be expected to be picked up by other nearby operations; therefore, there would be a concomitant increase in business at those other locations for a long-term, no net loss of jobs.

3.5.5 Construction-Related Economic Impacts

Should the Build Alternative be implemented, incrementally positive economic impacts to the Reno-Sparks area may be realized. For the 12- to 18-month duration of construction activities, use of local labor and local procurement of materials, goods, and services would result in increased local employment and business activity; however, no permanent employment or increase in business activity is anticipated as a result of construction activities associated with the proposed project.

The standard ratio used by FHWA to estimate the employment effects of investment in highway infrastructure is that every \$1 billion of federal-aid investment supports approximately 30,000 jobs on average. The employment estimate includes three basic types of jobs: direct, supporting, and induced employment:

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- **Construction-Oriented Employment:** Includes all jobs that are created either by the construction firms that work directly on the project or by the firms that provide direct inputs, such as paving materials and concrete;
- **Supporting Industries' Employment:** Includes jobs in firms that provide inputs to the industries that directly provide materials and equipment used in highway construction. For example, a firm that produces guard rails is counted as 'construction-oriented' employment above, but the firm that provides the sheet steel to make the guard rail is considered part of 'supporting industries' employment; and
- **Induced Employment:** Includes all of the jobs supported by consumer expenditures resulting from wages to 'construction-oriented' and 'supporting industries' employment.²⁵

The job creation ratios employed for this analysis, as shown below, for the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection derive from FHWA's most recent statistical model on employment impacts attributable to highway construction:

- Direct, construction-oriented employment effects of 354 jobs;
- Indirect and supporting industries employment effects of 142 jobs; and
- Induced employment effects of 531 jobs.

Construction of the Build Alternative would also generate temporary economic activity in the city, county and region, including purchases of goods, materials, and services required for construction, and employment of workers needed for construction from laborers in Washoe County and the surrounding Tahoe Basin region. The economic activity would also prompt secondary economic activity as construction-related business and employee income is spent in sectors throughout the regional economy.

The employment and income effects generated by construction expenditures would be spread over the 12 to 18 months required to construct the project. The extent of construction expenditures on the economies of Sparks, Washoe County, and other parts of Nevada would depend on the proportion of construction expenditures that would occur in the local and regional area and on the residential locations of persons employed by construction contractors for the project.

Table 3-4 provides an estimate of the number of positions and level of economic activity created by the expenditure of construction funds for the project. Estimates are based on an input/output study of construction activity by FHWA in 2007. Funds created in economic output include the

²⁵ Employment Impacts of Highway Infrastructure Investment can be accessed at www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/pubs/impacts/index.htm. For this employment estimate, a "job" is counting "person years." The total number of jobs, therefore, is spread out over the length of the construction period, which is estimated to be between 12 and 18 months. The calculations here assume 1-year. FHWA expresses that, "Although input-output models such as the one used for this analysis do not identify the geographic location of employment it is reasonable to assume that the majority of the construction-oriented employment will occur in or near the jurisdiction of the project." In addition, a portion of the induced employment will occur in and around the work site jurisdiction as construction workers spend their incomes purchasing goods and services in the local economy.

multiplier effect of direct construction being respend in service or other sectors of the economy. Economic activity generated by the proposed project is anticipated to benefit the Sparks-Reno region and would also follow the labor and material markets for transportation-related construction.

**Table 3-4: Construction Investment in the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard Intersection Improvement Project
(in millions of dollars, 2007)**

Alternative	Construction Value*	Supporting Industries Employment	Regional Economic Output (Total Employment Income)	Job Creation (Person Years of Employment)
Build Alternative	\$35.4	\$67	\$40.7	364
No Build Alternative	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* This figure does not include the cost for potential ROW acquisition.

There are also monetary savings that would accrue to the region from improvements in the intersection operating more efficiently, including such user benefits as savings in fuel, oil, tires, auto repair and maintenance; mobility savings, including travel time savings; and safety savings, including reduction in property damage and medical costs attributable to automobile crashes.

3.6 CONSTRUCTION-RELATED IMPACTS

Construction-related impacts could include, but not be limited to, those related to vehicular or pedestrian access and mobility, noise, dust generation, light pollution during nighttime hours, and visual changes to the existing landscape of the study area. The following analysis assumes that construction activities associated with the proposed project would occur using a segmented approach over a period of 12 to 18 months. No further details of construction timing and duration are known at this time.

3.6.1 No Build Alternative

In conformance with NEPA guidelines, the No Build Alternative represents the scenario in which the existing transportation system remains unchanged except for the modifications that are already programmed to be implemented in the study area.

Under the No Build Alternative, no changes to the current alignment are proposed. The existing number and configuration of lanes would remain the same as in current conditions. There would be no full or partial acquisitions of residential or business properties. Some slight economic impacts related to loss of business during construction may be avoided. Traffic-related impacts the community is currently experiencing would continue under the No Build Alternative.

This alternative would not address the proposed project's purpose and need and is inconsistent with the Washoe County 2040 RTP. The LOS of the intersection would continue to worsen over time. Current traffic safety issues at the intersection would not be resolved. Planned development and growth in the north area near Spanish Springs, though somewhat slowed down in the short term due to economic conditions, is expected to continue and eventually contribute to an increase in traffic congestion along south Pyramid Way in the morning and McCarran Boulevard in the

3. Environmental Consequences

afternoon, resulting in long queues and further degradation of the LOS. The No Build Alternative would further exacerbate impacts to the livability of the local neighborhoods as automobile traffic increases in the coming years, especially as growth continues to the north. Motorists would likely seek out what they would perceive as ways to bypass the bottleneck intersection, including commuting from the Spanish Springs area towards downtown Reno via Wedekind Road.

3.6.2 Build Alternative

Residential sections of the study area could experience temporary adverse impacts from noise and dust generation during construction. Dust generation would be minimized by application of special provisions during construction, including standard measures such as regular watering, covering exposed dirt piles, and construction site maintenance.

Construction noise would be intermittent and intensity would vary. The degree of construction noise impacts may vary for different areas of the project site and also depending on the construction activities undertaken. Long-term noise exposure descriptors are difficult to quantify due to the intermittent nature of construction noise. Highway construction is accomplished in several different phases. During the construction period, some of the sensitive receptors that are in close proximity to the intersection area would be exposed to higher noise levels. Effective noise control during construction of a project means minimizing noise disturbances to the surrounding residential community. A combination of techniques, including equipment noise control and administrative measures, would provide the most effective means of mitigation.

As outlined above, the Route #2 bus provides public transit service to the southern edge of the study area. It does not appear any alternate stops and/or routes need to be utilized by the bus line during construction, nor should it result in longer wait times and longer walking distances for passengers. If necessary, however, signage to indicate the locations of temporary bus stops would be provided during construction.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

This section analyzes potential environmental justice effects of the Build Alternative, determining whether there would be minority and low-income populations that would suffer disproportionately high and adverse impacts.

All projects involving a federal action (i.e., funding, permit, or land) must comply with Executive Order (E.O.) 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, signed on February 11, 1994, and intended to direct agencies to recommit to the principles embedded within Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal assistance. The Executive Order directs federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of projects on minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.

The general principles required under E.O. 12898 are as follows:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations;
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

In April 1997, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), which includes FHWA, issued its directive, DOT Order 5610.2 to “Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” which expands upon the requirements of the Executive Order and generally describes the process for incorporating environmental justice principles into all DOT programs, policies, and activities. The Order specifically identifies NEPA as the process through which the goals of E.O. 12898 are to be integrated. It also states that the findings, determinations, and/or demonstration of projects to be in accord with the DOT Order must be appropriately documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or other NEPA document.

For purposes of environmental justice, the DOT Order defines “minority populations” as those persons identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino, Black or African-American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander. “Low-income” is defined as persons with household income at or below the federally defined poverty threshold, which is based on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines. For 2011, this is \$22,350 for a family of four.

4. Environmental Justice

Environmental justice populations are communities that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- A minority population should be identified where the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent of the total population of the community.
- The low-income or minority population is meaningfully greater than the City or County average.²⁶

As a first order of business, FHWA requires a determination be made as to whether environmental justice populations may be affected by the proposed project. Unfortunately, no demographic data collected by government entities neatly lines up to meet the criteria of what comprises an environmental justice minority population. The best source for population data is the U.S. Census Bureau's decennial census. To protect privacy, the Census Bureau does not publish detailed house-by-house data, but instead compiles the information into larger geographic units. Data aggregated at the Block Group level is the smallest geographic unit for which the Census Bureau publishes both demographic data (e.g., race, age) and socioeconomic data (e.g., income, poverty levels). Block Groups are generally the size of several city blocks; therefore, they are often useful for representing the characteristics of a "community."

As can be discerned from Table 4-1 and Figure 1-3, the proposed project area encompasses portions of four census tracts from which socioeconomic data from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census have been collected.²⁷ From Table 4-1, certain key observations about the composition of the local population can be deduced.

Table 4-1: Race and Ethnicity

Geographic Area	% White	% African American	% American Indian / Alaska Native	% Asian	% Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	% Some other Race	% Two or more races
Block Group 1, Census Tract 28.01, Washoe County, NV	84.7	5.8	0.0	3.1	4.0	0.0	2.4
Block Group 2, Census Tract 28.01, Washoe County, NV	80.0	0.9	4.7	0.0	0.0	13.5	0.9
Block Group 4, Census Tract 28.02, Washoe	59.5	3.9	6.7	5.3	0.4	20.5	3.8

²⁶ Council on Environmental Quality, *Environmental Justice Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act*, December 10, 1997, p. 25; it has come to be generally accepted in environmental planning practice for federal projects that "meaningful greater" is 10 percent or greater than the jurisdiction against which the social and economic data is being compared.

²⁷ The category of "Some Other Race" was included in Census 2000 for the first time. Respondents who provided entries such as South African, Belizean, etc., or a Hispanic or Latino origin (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican) are included in the "Some Other Race" category.

Table 4-1: Race and Ethnicity

Geographic Area	% White	% African American	% American Indian / Alaska Native	% Asian	% Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	% Some other Race	% Two or more races
County, NV							
Block Group 1, Census Tract 29.01, Washoe County, NV	86.1	0.0	0.2	1.8	0.8	7.5	3.6
Block Group 3, Census Tract 29.01, Washoe County, NV	80.2	1.9	0.0	4.1	0.0	7.9	5.9
Block Group 1, Census Tract 29.02, Washoe County, NV	69.2	2.6	2.1	4.1	0.0	19.6	2.5
Block Group 2, Census Tract 29.02, Washoe County, NV	72.7	2.2	0.0	1.2	0.0	16.9	7.0
Washoe County	77	2	2	5	<1	10	4
State of Nevada	66	8	1	7	<1	5	4

Source: 2010 U.S. Decennial Census

As statistically shown in Table 4-1, the overall racial composition of the project study area is predominantly White, ranging from a low of 69 percent upwards to a high of 87 percent, with obviously much lower corresponding population percentages of Blacks, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders.

Table 4-1 shows that within the study area none of the affected Block Groups contains a total minority population greater than a third of the total population residing within that particular Block Group. Block Group 2 of Census Tract 28.01, Block Group 4 of Census Tract 28.02, and Block Group 1 of Census Tract 29.02, which encompasses areas east and west of Pyramid Way on the south side of McCarran Boulevard, similarly contain higher percentages (24, 18, and 26 percent, respectively) of people who identify themselves as “Some Other Race,” a category that largely represents those who are Hispanic/Latino and whose percentages are more than 10 percentage points higher than the Washoe County average of 11 percent; based on the preceding criteria, this constitutes an environmental justice community. However, it should be noted that the project as proposed would not directly impact or displace environmental justice populations residing within the Census Tract Block Groups bordering Pyramid Way to the west; the land uses directly fronting Pyramid Way are all non-residential properties, chief among them the Sparks Mercantile retail shopping center.

4. Environmental Justice

Table 4-2 shows data for income and poverty levels for the project study area and Washoe County. The data indicate that a smaller percentage of people residing in the project area were living below the federal poverty level threshold than was true of the city of Sparks as a whole or Washoe County; therefore, for purposes of screening for environmental justice concerns, the project area is not considered a low-income community.

Table 4-2: Median Income

Geographic Area	Median Household Income	Persons per Household	1999 Poverty Line ²⁸
Block Group 1, Census Tract 28.01, Washoe County, NV	\$66,944	3.0	\$13,880
Block Group 1, Census Tract 29.01, Washoe County, NV	\$61,250	3.0	\$13,880
Block Group 1, Census Tract 29.02, Washoe County, NV	\$41,594	2.9	\$13,598
Block Group 2, Census Tract 29.02, Washoe County, NV	\$37,458	2.6	\$12,752
Block Group 2, Census Tract 29.01, Washoe County, NV	\$44,896	2.8	\$13,316
Block Group 2, Census Tract 29.02, Washoe County, NV	\$51,157	2.9	\$13,598
Block Group 3, Census Tract 29.01, Washoe County, NV	\$59,375	2.9	\$13,598
Block Group 4, Census Tract 28.02, Washoe County, NV	\$45,588	2.6	\$12,752
Washoe County, NV	\$45,815	2.4	\$12,188
State of Nevada	\$44,581	2.7	\$12,752

Note: Data released from the 2010 Census as of August 2011 is available at the Block Group level only for population-based information and is not specific to income. For comparative purposes, a proportional fractional percentage was added based on the HHS recommended \$2,820 per person.

Based on this analysis, a minority population statistically large enough to constitute an environmental justice community exists within and adjacent to the proposed project area, and straddling both sides of Pyramid Way, south of McCarran Boulevard. In such cases, agencies are expected to have a heightened awareness of the potential for disproportionately high and adverse impacts, should involve these populations in the transportation decision-making process in a proactive manner, and be sensitive to these populations in carrying out their activities.

Disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority populations and/or low-income populations have been defined as an adverse effect that:

- Is predominantly borne by a minority population and/or low-income population; or

²⁸ The federal poverty line or level is issued each year by the Department of Health and Human Services, and is used for determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs, including Medicare, Family Planning Services, and the Community Food and Nutrition Program, among others. They are a simplified version of the Census Bureau's poverty thresholds and the same for the 48 contiguous states. Neither the Census Bureau nor the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) tabulates the number of people below the HHS poverty guidelines. The best approximation for the number of people below the HHS poverty guidelines in a specific area would be the number of persons below the Census Bureau poverty thresholds in that area. Information taken from the Department of HHS, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Accessed at: www.aspe.hhs.gov/poverty on November 14, 2011.

- Will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.

Under the Build Alternative, the proposed project would directly and adversely impact minority population households because they are located within Census Block Groups that would experience displacements and they have a percentage of such populations within them; despite that, these Block Groups contain more than a two-thirds non-minority residents. It is not expected that displacements would be predominantly experienced by minority population households or that they would be appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effects involving displacements that would be suffered by the non-minority population households.

None of the businesses that provide specialty goods and services that might cater to the area's multi-ethnic populations, especially Hispanic, as exhibited by the variety in services and languages displayed on signage, are known to be directly located within the project area.

Increased noise levels are expected to result from implementation of the project; however, soundwalls are being planned as mitigation and would be constructed according to decibel exceedance levels established by FHWA and NDOT, irrespective of demographic composition of the neighborhood.

Rather than be burdened by the proposed project, the local community and area commuters would experience net benefits because they would see a reduction in overall travel time and improved safety. While the extent to which minority populations would experience these benefits cannot be precisely quantified, the accessibility of destinations by members of these population groups would not be restricted in any manner, and there are no known local community resources for which accessibility would be altered as a result of the project.

The proposed project would:

- Alleviate idling caused by long queues at the intersection, which in turn would improve localized air quality conditions.
- Aid in eliminating a major bottleneck with high, congestion-related crash rates.
- Not eliminate any transit stops adjacent to the community, nor affect transit service.
- Not affect direct access to any neighborhood or community facility.
- Not displace or affect any community resources known to be important to minority populations.

In addition to the preceding project-level environmental justice analysis, RTC has analyzed and considered the environmental justice aspects of its overall slate of transportation projects and services and devoted a specific section to the issues of environmental justice and equity in its 2040 RTP. Local agencies typically set their own thresholds or criteria for defining low-income and minority communities, with oversight by the State DOT and FHWA for Title VI of the Civil Rights Act compliance. The analysis performed for the 2040 RTP update, approved November 21, 2008, established that a minority population consists of any Census Tract with at least 30

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percent of its population being collectively defined by minority classifications; a low-income population consists of any census tract with at least 15 percent of its residents being below the poverty level.

Based on the above population thresholds, the 2040 RTP indicates the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard Intersection Improvement Project study area comprises an environmental justice population based on its minority population percentages; the project study area does not contain what is considered a low-income community. The analysis conducted for the RTP concluded that with past implementation of overall program of projects and activities, there is a clear pattern that Washoe County's disadvantaged population groups have received reasonably proportional benefits and borne reasonably proportional burdens, and that the pattern of basic fairness and equity among all population groups will continue into the foreseeable future under the approved 2040 transportation planning and funding scenarios.²⁹

²⁹ Washoe County 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, Chapter 11—Environmental Justice, November 21, 2008.

5. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

5.1 Public Participation

Throughout the planning and environmental study phases of this project, RTC has made extended efforts to notify affected residents, business owners, and other likely stakeholders in the project area. Seven rounds of meetings have been held with a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) established to gain stakeholder feedback, identify and resolve local concerns, and build community awareness of the project. CAC meetings are designed to enhance communication about the proposed project, and the group's input is considered and expressed to the Project's Technical Advisory Committee.

The project and engineering design concepts have been presented to the public in a series of Sparks City Council meetings since 2007, and they have been refined over time as a result of participant feedback. Special community forums have also been conducted in Sparks, along with focus meetings with groups such as church groups and business and social organizations by RTC project managers.

5.2 Community Attitudes to Project

As RTC has made presentations around the community, gathered information and ideas, and identified constraints and trade-offs, many community members have expressed general support for the project, especially as project features to address community concerns have been incorporated and design variations that would have greater impacts have been eliminated. Still, it is valuable to capture some of the sentiments expressed in public forums by individuals who have not been in favor of the project. These include those who display frustration that the traffic congestion experienced at the Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard intersection is a result of poor land use planning and development approvals by local governments in Spanish Springs Valley, which is not within the decision-making purview of RTC, NDOT, or FHWA. Others have indicated that resolving the traffic problem at this intersection will only be a temporary fix, and it will just move the congestion problems to other locations.

Other concerns articulated in public meetings include:

- Project-induced noise and pollution
- Cost of the proposed project
- Difficulty for parishioners to access Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
- Effects on access to Emerson Way and the Village Green subdivision
- Commuters from Spanish Springs Valley would benefit over local residents
- Impacts on businesses
- Effects on older nearby residents
- Availability of comparable housing for people displaced
- Effects on local tax base of removing properties
- Fixing other area roadways

5. Community Outreach

As is fully documented in the Draft EIS, RTC has listened intently to all community voices and has responded by making several significant project changes, dropping certain alternatives, and studying design variations that are more compatible with the community.

6. MITIGATION

NDOT will be acquiring all property necessary for the required ROW for the proposed project and will observe the rights and services required under Public Law 91-646, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. The Uniform Relocation Act requires that relocation assistance be provided to any person, business, farm, or nonprofit operation displaced because of the acquisition of real property by a public entity for public use. Compliance with the federal act is required by any public agency where federal funds are to be used in the acquisition or construction of a proposed project. It is NDOT and FHWA policy that persons displaced as a result of transportation programs and projects shall receive fair and just compensation, and equitable and humane treatment, and shall not suffer unnecessarily as a result of programs designed for the benefit of the public. All eligible displacees will be entitled to moving and re-establishment expenses. All benefits and services will be provided without regard to race, color, religion, age, national origins, and disability as specified under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. A summary of relocation benefits is included in Appendix A.

NDOT has determined that the acquisition procedures will permit it to pursue an administrative settlement that will make up the difference between a property's fair market value and the outstanding mortgage if the appraised value of the property is less than the mortgage.

While financial assistance helps to offset the adverse economic impacts of residential relocation on households, sometimes adverse psychological and social impacts associated with the relocation process befall those who have a more difficult time in moving. Certain population groups, such as senior citizens and non-English speaking people, have especially strong community ties and depend on primary social relationships and important support networks that can be severed upon relocation. Households with school-age children may consider relocation disruptive if school transfers would be involved.

Additional or unusual circumstances may warrant other mitigation measures on a case-by-case basis. This is accomplished during the property acquisition phase through the negotiation process between the property owner and tenants, if any, and NDOT.

NDOT and RTC personnel will continue to work together to keep the various stakeholders, including the nearby businesses involved in retail sales likely to be most affected by construction, informed about schedules and other project-related information.

Maintaining access to business services will remain a high priority on the part of the project sponsors throughout the life of the project. Construction will be staged so that access to nearby businesses will not be made completely inaccessible.

All of the fire protection, police services, and emergency response units in the project area will also be informed of the construction period well in advance of the work. In addition, all facilities will be open during the construction period, though at times response time may be temporarily slowed because of lane closures.

6. Mitigation

RTC will coordinate lane closures and other construction activities with emergency service providers and the community-at-large.

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APPENDIX A - SUMMARY OF RELOCATION BENEFITS

INTRODUCTION

This appendix is general in nature and is not intended to be a complete statement of federal and state relocation laws and regulations. Any questions concerning relocation should be addressed to the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) Right-of-Way Division. This section provides some general descriptive information on Public Law (PL) 91-646, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. This is often referred to simply as the "Uniform Act." More details are available in Chapter 6.0 of the NDOT *Right-of-Way Manual* (February 24, 2011).

DECLARATION OF POLICY

"The purpose of this title is to establish a ***uniform policy for fair and equitable treatment*** of persons displaced as a result of federal and federally assisted programs in order that such persons ***shall not suffer disproportionate injuries*** as a result of programs designed for the benefit of the public as a whole."

The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, "No Person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation." The Uniform Act sets forth in statute the due process that must be followed in Real Property acquisitions involving federal funds. Supplementing the Uniform Act is the government-wide single rule for all agencies to follow, set forth in 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR), Part 24. Displaced individuals, families, businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations may be eligible for relocation advisory services and payments, as discussed below.

FAIR HOUSING

The Fair Housing Law (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) sets forth the policy of the United States to provide, within constitutional limitations, for fair housing. This Act, and as amended, make discriminatory practices in the purchase and rental of most residential units illegal. Whenever possible, minority persons shall be given reasonable opportunities to relocate to any available housing regardless of neighborhood, as long as the replacement dwellings are decent, safe, and sanitary and are within their financial means. This policy, however, does not require NDOT to provide a person a larger payment than is necessary to enable a person to relocate to a comparable replacement dwelling.

Any persons to be displaced will be assigned to a relocation advisor, who will work closely with each displacee to see that all payments and benefits are fully utilized, and that all regulations are observed, thereby avoiding the possibility of displacees jeopardizing or forfeiting any of their benefits or payments. At the time of the first written offer to purchase, owner-occupants are given a detailed explanation of the state's relocation services. Tenant occupants of properties to be acquired are contacted soon after the first written offer to purchase and also are given detailed information on relocation assistance. To avoid loss of possible benefits, no individual, family, business, farm, or nonprofit organization should commit to purchase or rent a replacement property without first contacting an NDOT relocation advisor.

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE ADVISORY SERVICES

In accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, NDOT will provide relocation advisory assistance to any person, business, farm, or nonprofit organization displaced as a result of the acquisition of real property for public use. NDOT will assist displacees in obtaining comparable replacement housing by providing current and continuing information on the availability and prices of both houses for sale and rental units that are “decent, safe, and sanitary.” Nonresidential displacees will receive information on comparable properties for lease or purchase. (For business, farm, and nonprofit organization relocation services, see below.)

Residential replacement dwellings will be in equal or better neighborhoods at rents or prices within the financial ability of the individuals and families displaced, and will be reasonably accessible to their places of employment. Before any displacement occurs, comparable replacement dwellings will be offered to displacees that are open to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.

Persons who are eligible for relocation payments and who are legally occupying the property required for the project will not be asked to move without first being given at least 90 days’ written notice. Occupants eligible for relocation payment(s) will not be required to move unless at least one comparable “decent, safe, and sanitary” replacement residence, available on the market, is offered to them.

RESIDENTIAL RELOCATION PAYMENTS PROGRAM

The Relocation Payment Program will help eligible residential occupants by paying certain costs and expenses. These costs are limited to those necessary for or incidental to the purchase or rental of the replacement dwellings and actual reasonable moving expenses to a new location within 50 miles of the displacement property. Any actual moving costs in excess of 50 miles are the responsibility of the displacee. The Residential Relocation Program can be summarized as follows:

Moving Costs

Any displaced person who lawfully occupied the acquired property, regardless of the length of occupancy in the property acquired, will be eligible for reimbursement of moving costs. Displacees will receive either the actual reasonable costs involved in moving themselves and personal property up to a maximum of 50 miles or a fixed payment based on a fixed moving cost schedule.

Purchase Supplement

In addition to moving and related expense payments, fully eligible homeowners may be entitled to payments for increased costs of replacement housing.

Homeowners who have owned and occupied their property for 180 days or more prior to the date of the first written offer to purchase the property may qualify to receive a price differential payment and may qualify to receive reimbursement for certain nonrecurring costs incidental to the purchase of the replacement property. An interest differential payment is also available if the interest rate for the loan on the replacement dwelling is higher than the loan rate on the

displacement dwelling, subject to certain limitations on reimbursement based upon the replacement property interest rate. The maximum combination of these three supplemental payments that the owner-occupant can receive is \$22,500. If the total entitlement (without the moving payments) is in excess of \$22,500, the Last Resort Housing Program will be used (see the explanation of the Last Resort Housing Program below).

Rental Supplement

Tenants who have occupied the property to be acquired by NDOT for 90 to 179 days prior to the date of the first written offer to purchase may qualify to receive a rental differential payment. This payment is made when NDOT determines that the cost to rent a comparable “decent, safe, and sanitary” replacement dwelling will be more than the present rent of the displacement dwelling. As an alternative, the tenant may qualify for a down payment benefit designed to assist in the purchase of a replacement property and the payment of certain costs incidental to the purchase, subject to certain limitations noted under the *Down Payment* section below. The maximum amount payable to any tenant of 90 days or more and any owner-occupant of 90 to 179 days, in addition to moving expenses, is \$5,250. If the total entitlement for rental supplement exceeds \$5,250, the Last Resort Housing Program will be used.

In addition to the occupancy requirements, to receive any relocation benefits, the displaced person must buy or rent and occupy a “decent, safe, and sanitary” replacement dwelling within 1-year from the date NDOT takes legal possession of the property or from the date the displacee vacates the displacement property, whichever is later.

Down Payment

The down payment option has been designed to aid owner occupants of 90 to 179 days and tenants with no less than 90 days of continuous occupancy prior to first written offer being made by NDOT. The down payment and incidental expenses cannot exceed the maximum payment of \$5,250. The 1-year eligibility period in which to purchase and occupy a “decent, safe, and sanitary” replacement dwelling will apply.

Last Resort Housing

Federal regulations (49 CFR 24) contain the policy and procedure for implementing the Last Resort Housing Program on federal-aid projects. Last Resort Housing benefits are, except for the amounts of payments and the methods in making them, the same as those benefits for standard residential relocation as explained above. Last Resort Housing has been designed primarily to cover situations where a displacee cannot be relocated because of lack of available comparable replacement housing or when the anticipated replacement housing payments exceed the \$5,250 and \$22,500 limits of the standard relocation procedure because either the displacee lacks the financial ability or other valid circumstances. In certain exceptional situations, Last Resort Housing may also be used for tenants of less than 90 days.

After the first written offer to acquire the property has been made, NDOT will, within a reasonable length of time, personally contact the displacees to gather important information, including the following:

- Preferences in area of relocation;

- Number of people to be displaced and the distribution of adults and children according to age and sex;
- Location of school and employment;
- Specific arrangements needed to accommodate any family member(s) special needs; and
- Financial ability to relocate into comparable replacement dwelling that will adequately house all members of the family.

NONRESIDENTIAL RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Nonresidential Relocation Assistance Program provides assistance to businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations in locating suitable replacement property and reimbursement for certain costs involved in relocation. The Relocation Advisory Assistance Program will provide current lists of properties offered for sale or rent, suitable for a particular business's specific relocation needs. The types of payments available to eligible businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations are for searching and moving expenses, and possibly re-establishment expenses or a fixed in lieu payment instead of any moving, searching, and re-establishment expenses. The payment types can be summarized as follows:

Moving Expenses

Moving expenses may include the following actual, reasonable costs:

- The moving of inventory, machinery, equipment, and similar business-related property; dismantling, disconnecting, crating, packing, loading, insuring, transporting, unloading, unpacking, and reconnecting of personal property.
- Loss of tangible personal property provides payment for actual, direct loss of personal property that the owner is permitted not to move.
- Expenses related to searching for a new business site, up to \$1,000 for reasonable expenses actually incurred.

Re-establishment Expenses

Re-establishment expenses related to the operation of the business at the new location, up to \$10,000 for reasonable expenses actually incurred.

Fixed In Lieu Payment

A fixed payment in lieu of moving and searching payments, and a re-establishment payment may be available to businesses that meet certain eligibility requirements. This payment is an amount equal to the average annual net earnings for the last 2 taxable years prior to the relocation and may not be less than \$1,000 or more than \$20,000.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Reimbursement for moving costs and replacement housing payments are not considered income for the purposes of the Internal Revenue Code, or resources for the purpose of determining the extent of eligibility of a displacee for assistance under the Social Security Act, local "Section 8" Housing Programs, or other Federal assistance programs.

APPENDIX B - PREPARERS OF REPORT

Gregory King has been an Environmental Manager with Parsons Transportation Group since 2009. Previously, he worked with the Division of Environmental Analysis within the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a supervising environmental planner specializing in the areas of community impact assessment and cultural resources management. He has served on Transportation Research Board National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) panels overseeing research studies conducted on topics related to environmental justice, social, economic, and community issues. Mr. King has a master's degree in American history from UC-Santa Barbara.

Lincoln Walker has been an Environmental Planner with Parsons Transportation Group since 2009. He has more than 6 years of experience working on planning projects for public and private clients. For these projects, he has provided technical analysis, research, public outreach, and drafted document sections. Mr. Walker has a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from UC-Irvine and a bachelor's degree in Urban Studies and Planning from UC-San Diego.

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